



Different types of quantitative data are available across the region. Some indicators measure direct beneficiary outreach, others reflect service infrastructure, and still others capture staffing and volunteer capacity. Although these data are not always comparable across countries, they clearly demonstrate that the social contribution of NPOs has both practical significance and measurable dimensions.



## CONCLUSION

The social contribution of NPOs in Central Asian countries is grounded in the practical provision of assistance, services, and protection for individuals facing vulnerability, risks, rights violations, or limited capacity to seek support independently. NPOs help transform personal problems into concrete solutions: consultation, access to services, documentation, protection, rehabilitation, safe accommodation, or integration into the social assistance system.

Regional practice reveals several consistent characteristics of this contribution. It is targeted, addressing the specific life situation of the individual. It is comprehensive, combining legal, psychological, social, rehabilitation, and advisory support. It is trust-based, operating effectively in sensitive and crisis contexts.

It is measurable in terms of outreach, though its deeper impact lies in improvements to people's quality of life, independence, and security.

Further strengthening of this contribution requires sustainable financing, formal recognition of specialised services within state systems, expanded social contracting mechanisms, qualitative assessment of outcomes, and more systematic integration of proven NPO models into national social policy.



## 10. Thematic Contribution of NPOs: A General “Map” for Central Asia

The previous sections of this report examined the institutional contribution, participation in governance quality, economic development, and social support provided by NPOs. This section shifts the focus to the thematic distribution of NPO activities across key development areas: healthcare, education, gender equality, rights protection, environment, poverty reduction, local development, youth, culture, and social cohesion.

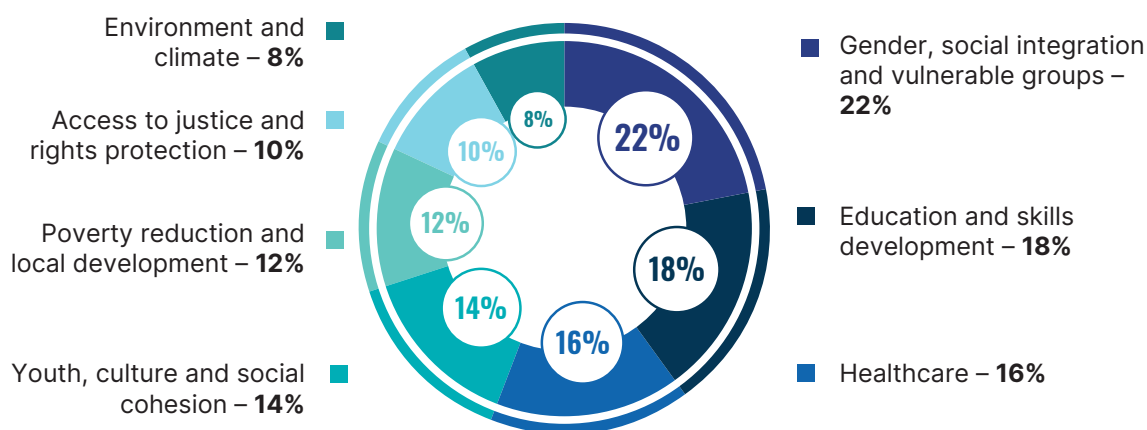
NPOs rarely confine themselves to a single function within any thematic domain. In healthcare, they may simultaneously engage in prevention, patient support, specialist training, and resource mobilisation. In education, they develop skills, support vulnerable groups, create new methodologies, and enhance teacher qualifications. In the justice sector, they provide legal consultations to citizens, participate in expert reviews of regulatory acts, and document systemic barriers to rights. The thematic map therefore does not depict isolated “sectors of presence” but rather the diverse combinations of functions that NPOs perform within each area of development.

For Central Asian countries, such a map offers a clearer regional picture precisely because available data are uneven. In some countries, quantitative indicators are more robust; in others, qualitative case studies, participation in government programmes, expert platforms, or work with specific groups are more prominent. Accordingly, this section does not rank countries by scale of contribution. Instead, it illustrates how the overall pattern of NPO participation in key development areas takes shape across the region.

For visual representation, an indicative diagram of the distribution of NPO thematic activity across major development sectors is presented below (Figure 11).

The diagram draws on sectoral data from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, supplemented by expert assessment of thematic coverage in the country materials for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The shares are approximate and reflect the relative distribution of thematic activity rather than official statistics on the number of organisations or funding volumes.

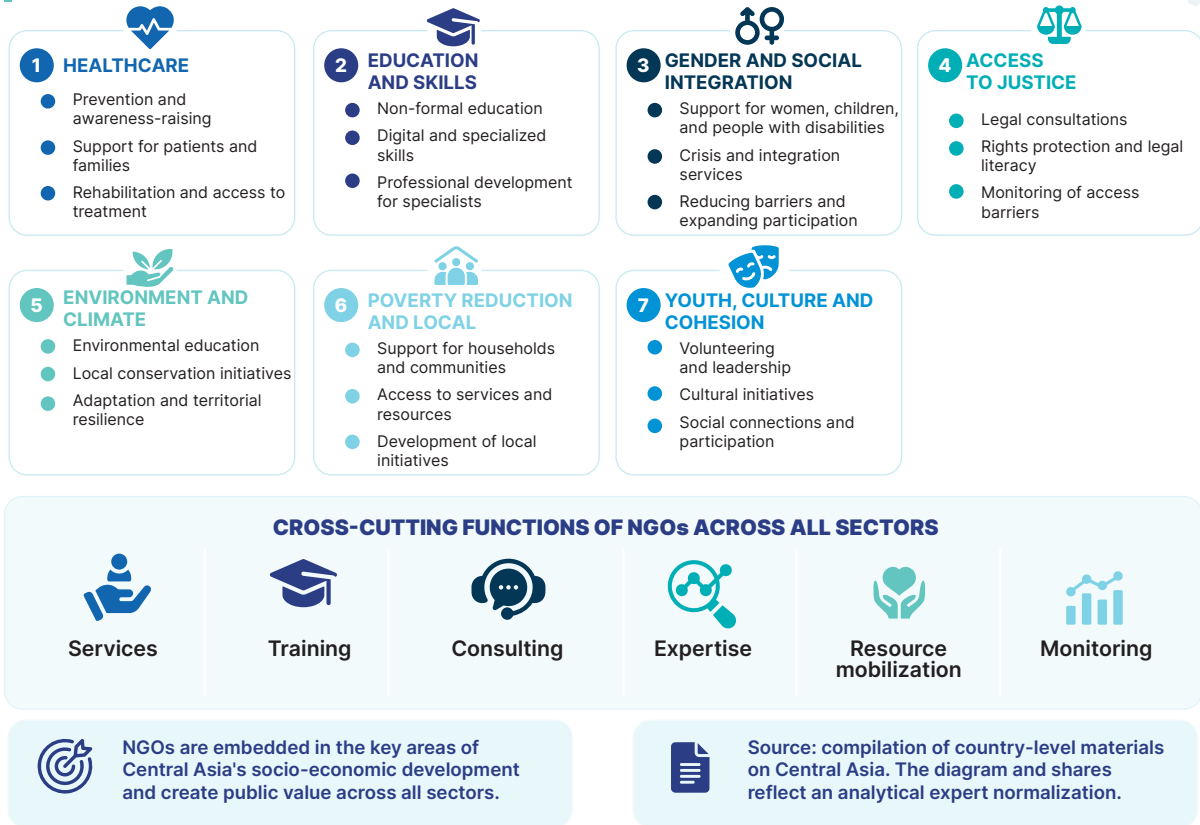
**Figure 11. Estimated Distribution of NPO Thematic Activity in Central Asia**





## THEMATIC CONTRIBUTION OF NGOs

7 key areas of NGOs' contribution to the development of Central Asia



## 10.1. Healthcare

In healthcare and related subsectors, NPOs occupy specialised niches focused on prevention, improving access to care, patient support, and work with groups for whom standard medical services require additional social, psychological, or informational components. Their role is particularly prominent in areas such as HIV, tuberculosis, chronic and severe diseases, rehabilitation, palliative care, patient communities, and medico-social support. Key areas of activity include:

- Disease prevention and dissemination of reliable information among the population;
- Work with patient communities and groups facing stigma;
- Socio-medical and socio-psychological services;
- Rehabilitation services and support for patient independence;
- Self-help programmes for chronic and severe diseases;
- Mobilisation of external resources for areas requiring sustainable financing;
- Training of specialists and increasing institutional sensitivity to patients' needs;
- Public monitoring of access to treatment, medicines, and services;
- Participation in the development of prevention and health-support programmes, as well as other activities.



In Kazakhstan, NPOs are active in in-patient support, hospice care, and work on rare and socially significant diseases. In Turkmenistan, socially oriented organisations focus on medico-social and rehabilitation support. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, NPO contributions to healthcare are most visible through social protection, psychosocial support, and programmes targeting vulnerable groups. In Kyrgyzstan, NPOs organise and deliver socio-medical services, rehabilitation, prevention activities, and health promotion programmes, while providing sustained support to patients with severe and chronic conditions. Work on HIV and tuberculosis stands out as a particularly strong area of collaboration, where NPOs help mobilise additional resources and maintain trust-based engagement with key populations.



### EXAMPLE

#### Kyrgyzstan: HIV and Tuberculosis as an Area of Partnership between NPOs and the State

In Kyrgyzstan, NPO participation in HIV and tuberculosis programmes effectively links government mechanisms, international financing, and direct engagement with target groups. Active involvement has helped attract an additional USD 24–30 million per year to complement the state budget in these areas. This example demonstrates that the contribution of NPOs to healthcare extends well beyond the provision of individual services. It also expands the resource base of the sector, improves access for hard-to-reach populations, and ensures continuity of support.

The healthcare sector exemplifies one of the most characteristic roles of NPOs: they strengthen those elements of the system that receive insufficient state support and are not commercially attractive to the private sector—including prevention and information, trust-based and targeted approaches, long-term patient engagement, and adaptation of services to vulnerable groups.

## 10.2. Education and Skills Development

Education is one of the most natural domains of NPO activity, as virtually all sustainable individual support involves expanding knowledge, skills, and the capacity for independent action. The educational contribution of NPOs goes beyond training programmes: it encompasses human capital development, professional skills enhancement, and improved access to learning for groups facing barriers within the formal education system. Key areas of activity include:

- Non-formal education for adults and youth;
- Vocational training and retraining;
- Professional development for specialists in social, educational, and legal fields;
- Digital skills development and access to modern learning formats;
- Inclusive education for children and adults with disabilities;
- Support for preschool, extracurricular, and supplementary education;
- Financial, legal, and civic literacy training;
- Training of volunteers and community leaders;
- Development of teaching materials and adapted methodologies;
- Training of government officials on sensitive social issues.

In Uzbekistan, NPO educational work is closely linked to social, cultural, legal, and awareness-raising initiatives. In Turkmenistan, public organisations contribute to professional development, youth policy, volunteering, and public awareness. In Tajikistan, NPOs employ education to strengthen legal, gender, digital, and civic competencies. In Kyrgyzstan, they are actively engaged in professional development, non-formal vocational education for adults, supplementary education for vulnerable groups, inclusive education, and improved access to preschool services. In Kazakhstan, digital and inclusive educational practices are advancing, including training for persons with disabilities in modern professional skills.



### EXAMPLE

#### Turkmenistan: Digital Literacy, Vocational Training, and Volunteer Development

In Turkmenistan, **450** rural women completed digital literacy courses with the support of the public association “Yenme”, while around **200** volunteers were trained under the “Volunteer Academy” project to participate in social programmes. In addition, the Union of Economists of Turkmenistan developed and introduced the country’s first online platform for distance learning and certification of accountants. In 2024, more than **2,000** specialists from the regions completed professional development training through this platform. These examples illustrate the role of NPOs in broadening access to modern competencies, professional upgrading, and volunteer engagement.



### EXAMPLE

#### Kazakhstan: Creating a Platform for Civic Education and Public Initiatives

In Kazakhstan, the public foundation “Erkindik Qanaty” established the Human Rights Hub - a multi-functional platform for civic education, human rights initiatives, public discussions, and cultural-educational events. Opened in 2019, the Hub has welcomed more than **6,000** visitors. In 2023–2024 alone, it hosted **116** events with around **2,000** participants, including human rights training courses, public lectures and discussions, film screenings, exhibitions, and debates. This example demonstrates the contribution of NPOs to civic education, leadership development, legal culture, and the creation of sustainable spaces for youth and public initiatives.



### EXAMPLE

#### Uzbekistan: Digital Skills and Women’s Self-Employment

Between 2020 and 2025, the International Women’s Public Foundation SHARQ AYOLI implemented the “Women and the Digital Economy” project, which developed digital and entrepreneurial skills among women, particularly in rural areas.

A total of **5,365** women completed the training. Around **2,000** women, including women with disabilities, received microloans and registered as self-employed via soliq.uz.

In 2025, an additional **800** women entrepreneurs received training in online business and the use of artificial intelligence.

The educational contribution of NPOs extends beyond target groups. It also enables the state and society to respond more rapidly to emerging needs – digitalisation, inclusion, labour-market shifts, work with vulnerable populations, and the training of specialists in non-standard practical approaches.



## 10.3. Gender, Social Integration, and Vulnerable Groups

Gender equality and social integration constitute one of the most consistent and prominent areas of NPO activity across the region. Organisations in this field address rights, safety, participation, social visibility, and access to opportunities for women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, youth, rural residents, and other groups facing structural barriers. Key areas of activity include:

- ❁ Promotion of gender equality and expansion of women's participation in public life;
- ❁ Prevention of and response to violence;
- ❁ Crisis services, shelters, and psychological support;
- ❁ Protection of the rights of persons with disabilities;
- ❁ Support for independent living and social integration;
- ❁ Work with children and families in difficult life situations;
- ❁ Assistance to rural women, migrants, and other groups with limited access to services;
- ❁ Awareness-raising among families and communities;
- ❁ Participation in the development of laws, programmes, and action plans;
- ❁ Changing public attitudes through training, consultations, situation monitoring, and oversight of law enforcement practices.

Across Central Asian countries, NPO activities in gender, social integration, and support for vulnerable groups focus on a similar range of beneficiaries: women, children, persons with disabilities, families in difficult circumstances, older persons, migrants, graduates of residential institutions, and other populations facing restricted access to services and protection.

**For these beneficiary groups, NPOs perform several overlapping and complementary roles:**

- ❁ Service provision role — operating crisis centres, shelters, psychological support services, semi-residential facilities, rehabilitation programmes, and assistance to families in difficult life situations;
- ❁ Human rights role — protecting the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, migrants, survivors of violence, and undocumented individuals;
- ❁ Integration role — expanding access to education, employment, communication, and public life for women, persons with disabilities, children with autism, care leavers, older persons, and other groups;
- ❁ Expert and advocacy role — contributing to the development of laws, action plans, service standards, and policy discussions on gender equality and social issues;
- ❁ Intermediary role — bridging beneficiaries, families, government institutions, local authorities, and service providers;
- ❁ Attitude-shifting role — raising awareness, working with families and communities, reducing stigma, and increasing the visibility of marginalised issues.

Regional differences are evident in the prevailing emphasis. In Tajikistan, the expert and advocacy role of women's organisations in shaping gender policy and legislation is particularly prominent. In Turkmenistan, social integration efforts centre on practical assistance for women affected by violence and persons with disabilities. In Kazakhstan, the sector features a wide range of specialised services for groups requiring long-term support. In Kyrgyzstan, the service provision role of NPOs is especially visible in crisis centres and semi-residential social services, alongside strong advocacy for progressive legislative reforms to protect women's rights. In Uzbekistan, NPOs combine social, legal, and psychosocial assistance with the gradual strengthening of public participation and rights protection.



#### EXAMPLE

##### Tajikistan: Promotion of the Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities

The Coalition of Women's Organizations of Tajikistan played a sustained role in advancing the Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities. This effort encompassed expert support for the draft law, organisation of public hearings, engagement with government institutions, and alignment with international commitments. Over the course of the initiative, more than 50 rounds of public hearings and expert meetings were conducted.

Coalitions such as the public association "Gender and Development" and "From Legal Equality to Actual Equality" provided expert input at every stage - from conceptual development to parliamentary readings - helping harmonise national legislation with obligations under CEDAW. The establishment of a permanent dialogue channel with the Committee on Women and Family Affairs has positioned NPOs as systematic participants in monitoring the implementation of gender norms.



#### EXAMPLE

##### Turkmenistan: Trust-Based Support for Women Affected by Violence

In Turkmenistan, the public association "Keýik Okara" provides shelter and psychological assistance to women affected by violence. In 2024, 1,200 women received consultations. This form of support demands strict confidentiality, high levels of trust, and the capacity to address sensitive life situations without exacerbating the social vulnerability of those seeking help.

## 10.4. Access to Justice and Rights Protection

For NPOs, access to justice constitutes one of the most practical dimensions of human security - enabling individuals to understand their rights, seek protection, and resolve problems within the legal framework. For many vulnerable groups, legal issues are rarely isolated; they are intertwined with violence, migration, lack of documentation, disability, poverty, family conflict, labour exploitation, or limited access to public services. In this sector, NPOs assist citizens in protecting their rights, navigating procedures, obtaining legal aid, engaging with government institutions, and contributing to the improvement of law enforcement practices. The sector is especially critical for those facing legal barriers, fear of state institutions, low legal literacy, or insufficient resources to defend their interests. Key areas of activity include:

- Free legal consultations;
- Preparation of applications, complaints, petitions, and appeals;
- Representation of beneficiaries before government institutions and courts;
- Assistance in restoring documents;
- Legal awareness-raising among the population;
- Monitoring of human rights compliance;
- Participation in the development and expert review of regulatory legal acts;
- Advocacy for the interests of vulnerable groups;
- Training of government officials and specialists;
- Support for guaranteed legal aid mechanisms;
- Identification of systemic barriers to access to justice.



Across the region, the toolkit employed by NPOs in access to justice is largely similar, although emphasis varies by country. In Kyrgyzstan, the sector is clearly visible through free legal aid, participation in law-making, independent review of draft legislation, and public monitoring of rights compliance. In Tajikistan, legal work is closely linked to gender policy, migration, combating trafficking in persons, and engagement in inter-agency platforms. In Turkmenistan, advisory assistance on sensitive issues, including trafficking and support for survivors of violence, is more prominent. In Uzbekistan, NPOs combine direct legal support with public monitoring and discussion of draft regulatory acts. In Kazakhstan, the legal role of NPOs is reflected in public oversight, protection of socially vulnerable groups, and participation in expert platforms.



### EXAMPLE

#### Kyrgyzstan: National NPO Network for the Development of State-Guaranteed Legal Aid

In Kyrgyzstan, NPOs established the Coalition “Promoting the Development of the State-Guaranteed Legal Aid System,” which later evolved into the National NPO Network for the Development of State-Guaranteed Legal Aid, uniting **44** organisations. The network has played a key role in implementing state guarantees of legal aid, protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, and raising legal literacy. As part of this work, **83** paralegals were trained in the regions, monitoring of the state-guaranteed legal aid system was conducted, and recommendations were submitted to improve quality and accessibility. These efforts contributed to the expansion of the register of state-guaranteed legal aid lawyers, revision of lawyers’ payment rates, and an increase in the budget allocated to legal aid services.

## 10.5. Environment and Climate

The environmental and climate agenda is an increasingly prominent area of NPO activity, as environmental issues are inextricably linked to quality of life, public health, territorial resilience, and long-term development prospects. For civil society, this domain is particularly significant because it requires public awareness, behavioural change, local community participation, trust in data, and open discussion of territorial consequences.

In this sector, NPOs serve as intermediaries between environmental policy, local realities, and everyday practices. They translate complex issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, pollution, resource efficiency, and environmental safety, into actionable steps for schools, youth, communities, local initiatives, and populations dependent on natural resources. Consequently, the environmental agenda acquires a practical dimension: from awareness-raising and monitoring to localised solutions that affect health, food security, rural resilience, and urban environmental quality. Key areas of activity include:

- Environmental education and public engagement;
- Promotion of nature conservation initiatives;
- Participation in climate change adaptation;
- Development of green and resource-efficient solutions;
- Biodiversity protection;
- Support for local environmental initiatives;
- Engagement of youth and schools in the environmental agenda;
- Public monitoring of environmental risks;
- Participation in discussions of environmental decisions and programmes;
- Linking the environmental agenda with local development, health, and community resilience.



While core areas of focus are similar across the region, the emphasis differs by country. In Kyrgyzstan, environmental NPO activity is most visible in awareness-raising, climate adaptation, promotion of green solutions, and the integration of environmental safety with education. In Tajikistan, the agenda is closely linked to biodiversity, food security, and rural community resilience. In Turkmenistan, public organisations operate within national nature conservation and climate priorities, including greening, awareness-raising, and practical community involvement. In Kazakhstan, public monitoring and mobilisation around environmental risks and conservation decisions are more prominent. In Uzbekistan, environmental work centres on public participation, local initiatives, and the gradual integration of civil society into the sustainable development agenda.



#### **EXAMPLE**

##### **Kazakhstan: Public Monitoring and Environmental Safety in Atbasar**

In the town of Atbasar, the public association “Angel” initiated monitoring of flood prevention measures following the devastating floods of 2009, 2014, and 2017. The organization collected data, engaged scientific expertise, and formed a coalition involving researchers, media representatives, a Member of Parliament, and international mechanisms.

As a result, systemic errors in the management of flood prevention measures were identified, and expert recommendations were taken into account when adjusting the town’s engineering protection measures. A practical outcome was the provision of new housing to 90 families affected by the floods. This example shows that NPOs can strengthen public oversight, increase the transparency of budgetary decisions, and help the state make more evidence-based decisions in the area of environmental safety.



#### **EXAMPLE**

##### **Tajikistan: Biodiversity and Local Seed Funds**

The public association “Zan va Zamin” worked for three years to secure Tajikistan’s inclusion in the International Register of Countries on Biodiversity. This effort laid the foundation for the establishment of local seed banks managed by rural women. The initiative highlights the interconnection between environmental action, food security, preservation of local genetic resources, and the expanded role of women in managing natural and agricultural heritage.



### ПРИМЕР

#### Turkmenistan: From Scientific Expertise to Mass Public Campaigns

The Society for Nature Conservation of Turkmenistan is an example of an NPO that combines a high-level expert role with mass civic mobilization. The organization participates in the development of the Red Book and organizes scientific conferences at the government level, while also engaging thousands of volunteers in nationwide campaigns to plant 1.5 million tree seedlings. This illustrates how NPOs connect state environmental policies with the actions of individual citizens. The Society participates in shaping the country's environmental policy through mechanisms related to the preparation of the Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals and its work in the Public Council of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. The organization implements practical conservation projects in specially protected natural areas, including improving water supply for rare species of flora and fauna and introducing elements of green energy.

In addition, the Society conducts large-scale environmental awareness-raising work through documentary films, educational programmes, and volunteer campaigns, and participates in the implementation of the national greening programme.

This multifaceted approach demonstrates how NPOs connect nature conservation, climate and natural risk management, and everyday territorial resilience with public health, food security, local resources, and active citizen participation in long-term development challenges.

## 10.6. Youth, Culture, and Social Cohesion

The youth, cultural, and civic agenda represents an area in which NPOs contribute significantly to the formation of social ties, trust, civic engagement, and individuals' capacity to participate meaningfully in community life. These domains strengthen skills for joint action, intergenerational dialogue, local identity, volunteering, and youth involvement in addressing socially significant issues. For the countries of the region, this contribution is particularly relevant given the high proportion of young people in the population, disparities between urban and rural opportunities, migration dynamics, and the need for sustainable forms of public dialogue.

In this sector, NPOs create spaces where young people, creative groups, volunteers, local communities, and cultural initiatives can express themselves, develop leadership and communication skills, participate in public projects, and maintain connections to local identity. This work enhances the overall social environment by reducing isolation, fostering a sense of belonging, preventing conflict, and laying the groundwork for more active citizen participation in territorial development. Key areas of activity include:

- ❁ Youth education and leadership programmes;
- ❁ Development of volunteering;
- ❁ Civic and legal education for youth;
- ❁ Cultural initiatives and heritage preservation;
- ❁ Support for creative and public associations;
- ❁ Work with youth in rural and remote areas;
- ❁ Prevention of social isolation and risky behaviour;
- ❁ Development of skills for participation in decision-making;
- ❁ Strengthening intergroup dialogue and social cohesion;
- ❁ Participation in government youth, cultural, and social programmes.



In Turkmenistan, this sector is particularly visible through youth organisations, cultural associations, creative unions, sports bodies, and activities linked to national traditions, healthy lifestyles, and public participation. In Uzbekistan, youth and cultural initiatives are connected to social partnership, education, civic engagement, and local community support. In Kazakhstan, youth activity develops through volunteering, civic forums, public platforms, and social projects. In Kyrgyzstan, NPOs contribute to youth policy, civic education, leadership programmes, and youth involvement in development. In Tajikistan, youth constitute a key target group for NPOs, especially in legal assistance, migration support, labour rights, gender equality, and local development.



### EXAMPLE

#### Turkmenistan: Youth, Culture, and Public Participation

In Turkmenistan, the Youth Union, creative unions, and organisations working in cultural and sports spheres participate in the implementation of youth policy, preservation of national traditions, development of public participation, and organisation of local-level activities. Such initiatives strengthen social ties, engage young people in socially beneficial projects, and support cultural continuity.

The thematic analysis reveals that the contribution of NPOs cannot always be reduced to discrete services or projects with immediately measurable outcomes. A substantial part of their impact arises through more intangible yet critical processes: fostering participation, building trust, establishing shared norms, promoting volunteering, and enabling individuals to engage meaningfully in community life.



### CONCLUSION

The thematic map demonstrates that NPOs in Central Asian countries operate across a broad spectrum of development domains. Their presence is evident in healthcare, education, gender equality and social integration, access to justice, environmental protection, poverty reduction, local development, youth policy, culture, and social cohesion. Within each thematic area, NPOs perform multiple functions: delivering services, conducting training, providing consultations, protecting rights, contributing to policy development, attracting resources, organising communities, carrying out monitoring, and introducing innovative approaches.

The central conclusion of this thematic analysis is that NPOs do not constitute a separate or “parallel” sphere of development. Rather, they are deeply embedded within the key socio-economic priorities of the region and frequently operate at the intersection of multiple objectives. A single organisation may simultaneously provide services, train specialists, defend the rights of specific groups, mobilise financing, and participate in public policy discussions.

This map therefore serves as a valuable foundation for more systematic assessment of NPO contributions. It highlights which sectors lend themselves to quantitative indicators, which are better captured through qualitative case studies, and where a combination of data on outreach, service delivery, institutional participation, and measurable changes in beneficiaries’ lives is most appropriate.



## 11. Qualitative Characteristics of NPO Contribution

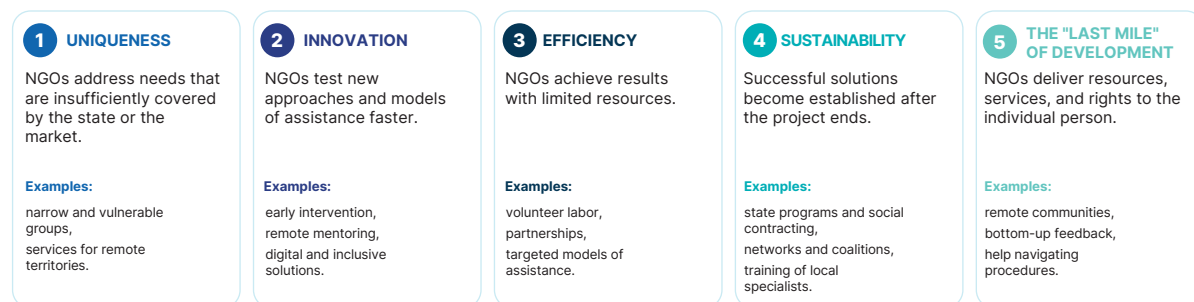
The contribution of NPOs differs qualitatively from that of other institutional actors in development - families, the state, and the private sector. NPO solutions often diverge from standardised services by creating new approaches, responding directly to people's lived needs, embedding themselves in sustainable practice, and reaching groups and territories that are more difficult to cover through conventional governance mechanisms.

Drawing on the distinctive nature of NPO activities, their results, and accumulated experience across the region, five main qualitative characteristics of their contribution can be identified:

-  Uniqueness;
-  Innovation;
-  Effectiveness;
-  Sustainability; and
-  The ability to perform the “delivery” function of bringing development to remote, excluded, and vulnerable groups and territories.

### QUALITATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF NGOS' CONTRIBUTION

Why the contribution of NGOs matters not only in scale but also in the quality of the solutions they create



#### Key takeaway:

The strength of NGOs lies not only in the scale of their activities but also in the quality of their solutions: they can be unique, innovative, effective, sustainable, and able to reach those who are hardest to cover through standard mechanisms.

**Uniqueness** lies in NPOs' capacity to fill specific niches by complementing state and market activities in areas that remain insufficiently covered and require specialised or highly targeted forms of work. This is particularly evident in work with small population groups, sensitive issues, remote territories, and complex cases that demand long-term contact and trust. Examples include computer literacy training for persons with visual impairments, provision of internet access to remote villages, street outreach with people who inject drugs, support for people living with HIV or tuberculosis, psychosocial services for individuals with mental health conditions, services for children with autism, rehabilitation of children and adults with disabilities, crisis services for women and children affected by violence, and support for independent living and supplementary education for persons with disabilities.



**Innovation** refers to the ability of NPOs to be among the first to test and refine new methods for addressing social, legal, economic, and environmental challenges. This extends beyond technology to encompass new formats of assistance, learning, integration, and participation. Notable examples include early childhood development and early intervention methodologies, innovative rehabilitation programmes for children with autism, parent schools, self-help programmes for patients with severe and chronic diseases, publication of books and textbooks in Braille, mobile training formats in remote regions, remote mentoring for women entrepreneurs, e-commerce training, development of IT skills among youth with disabilities, assistive technologies, green solutions, and community-based data collection and monitoring tools.

**Effectiveness** is reflected in NPOs' ability to deliver practical, relatively cost-efficient solutions that achieve meaningful results with limited resources and reduce the burden on public budgets. This stems from a precise understanding of beneficiaries' needs, strategic partnerships, volunteer labour, mobilisation of external resources, and more flexible operational models. Illustrative practices include semi-residential social services, development of entrepreneurial skills and start-ups through training, mentoring and equipment provision, support for self-employment instead of one-off charity, helping vulnerable groups transition to economically active roles, attracting additional resources for HIV and tuberculosis programmes, utilisation of state social contracting, public monitoring of expenditures, and development of local service models based on community participation.

**Sustainability** means that NPO-initiated solutions often continue beyond the lifespan of individual projects and become embedded in regular practice through government programmes, social contracting mechanisms, regulatory changes, new methodologies, coalitions, local services, or social entrepreneurship. Particularly significant are cases in which NPO pilots are scaled or institutionalised: free legal aid evolving into a sustainable public service; semi-residential services and crisis centres integrated via social contracting; HIV and tuberculosis prevention and treatment programmes expanded; inclusive education and support mechanisms for persons with disabilities advanced; entrepreneurship support centres with regional branches established; environmental coalitions formed; local services transferred to community management; and trained specialists, volunteers, parents, and consultants continuing to apply new methodologies.

**The "delivery" function - bringing development to remote, excluded, and vulnerable groups and territories** - complements the above characteristics. It demonstrates NPOs' ability to channel existing resources, services, rights, and programmes to specific individuals, families, and communities. This function is especially critical for remote territories, small communities, and vulnerable groups that remain less visible in national policy frameworks. NPOs identify needs from the ground up, connect people with state and local authorities, assist with procedures, transmit information to groups with limited access to standard channels, and feed local realities back into the decision-making system.



## CONCLUSION

Taken together, these qualitative characteristics demonstrate that the contribution of NPOs extends beyond institutional, economic, social, or thematic dimensions. A defining feature lies in the intrinsic quality of the solutions they create: unique in their niche, innovative in method, effective in resource use, sustainable in their long-term effects, and accessible to those who are hardest to reach. It is precisely this qualitative nature that explains why NPOs remain vital development actors even in cases where their results are difficult to capture fully through standard statistical indicators.



## 12. Regional Conclusions

The conclusions presented below synthesise the key patterns identified through the analysis of NPO contributions in Central Asian countries.

- 01** NPOs have become **a stable and recognised participant in socio-economic development** across the region. Their contribution spans the economy, social services, governance quality, local development, rights protection, support for vulnerable groups, and engagement in key development sectors. This positions NPOs as one of the enduring institutions that influence the quality of services, people's access to support, and the practical implementation of state priorities.
- 02** NPO contributions manifest through **distinct national models**. Kyrgyzstan offers a clearer picture of measurable institutional contribution; Kazakhstan demonstrates well-developed partnership mechanisms between NPOs and the state; Uzbekistan shows strengthening legal, organisational, and financial infrastructure for NPO support; Tajikistan illustrates expert participation in strategic and inter-agency processes; and Turkmenistan reflects the integration of public organisations into state priorities and socially significant programmes. These models highlight different channels through which NPO contributions materialise and allow for assessment without imposing a single comparative scale.
- 03** The institutional contribution of NPOs confirms **the economic significance of the sector**. NPOs generate employment, pay wages, procure goods and services, mobilise and redistribute financial resources for socially significant purposes, and contribute tax revenues. However, a complete quantitative picture is not yet available in all countries. Regional analysis must therefore account for differences in statistical accounting, reporting systems, and the extent to which NPOs are distinctly identified in national data.
- 04** The statutory activities of NPOs generate **substantial additional social, economic, and governance-related effects**. Through their programmes and services, NPOs foster entrepreneurship, self-employment, economic skills, social entrepreneurship, local infrastructure development, access to rights, crisis assistance, rehabilitation, citizen participation, and community feedback. These effects frequently extend beyond direct organisational reporting, manifesting in improved opportunities for individuals, greater family resilience, enhanced community activity, and better-informed local decisions.
- 05** The strongest attributes of NPOs lie in their **targeting, flexibility, innovation**, and ability to respond to the specific life situations of individuals and communities. They develop solutions for groups and problems that are difficult to address through mass programmes — survivors of violence, persons with disabilities, migrants, undocumented individuals, patients with severe medical conditions, rural women, youth, older persons, and residents of remote areas.
- 06** NPOs strengthen the state through **expertise**. They prepare proposals for programmes and regulatory acts, mobilise additional resources, and deliver services in areas where specialised knowledge is required. This improves both the quality and the range of public policy solutions.



- 07** NPOs strengthen the state through **feedback and participation** in policy implementation. They help identify population needs, engage in working groups and public platforms, conduct monitoring, and maintain direct contact with beneficiaries. This increases the sensitivity of government decisions to real-world conditions.
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- 08** The thematic map reveals **broad coverage** of NPO activities across healthcare, education, gender equality and social integration, access to justice, environment and climate, poverty reduction, local development, youth policy, culture, and social cohesion. In each sector, NPOs perform multiple functions — delivering services, providing training, offering consultations, protecting rights, contributing to policy development, mobilising resources, organising communities, and introducing innovative approaches.
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- 09** A principal limitation of the current regional evidence base is the **weak comparability of data** on results and impact. Countries more often record (though still incompletely!) the registration of organisations, selected financial flows, projects, events, services, and beneficiary outreach. Long-term changes in people's situations, service quality, community resilience, policy effectiveness, and beneficiaries' economic activity are captured far less systematically. This constrains comprehensive regional assessment and represents an important area for future improvement.
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- 10** Greater recognition of NPO contributions requires a shift from describing activities to **systematically assessing their impact**. This calls for more comparable data (including self-reported data), regular results reporting, a balanced system of qualitative and quantitative impact indicators, formal recognition of NPO contributions in public and statistical systems, and wider use of case studies demonstrating changes in the lives of people, communities, and territories. A first practical step could be the introduction of satellite accounts for the non-profit sector, which would render NPO contributions more visible to the state, society, business, and international partners.
- 
- 11** NPOs have become an important factor in improving the enabling environment for economic activity in Central Asia. Their contribution is particularly visible where it is necessary to enhance implementation quality, reduce barriers for households and entrepreneurs, develop local infrastructure, ensure more sustainable services, and make territorial environments more conducive to **economic activity**.
- 
- 12** One of the key regional conclusions is that NPOs influence **the investment climate and private sector development** primarily indirectly, yet in a systematic manner. They do so by developing skills, supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship, contributing to infrastructure and service improvements, increasing transparency in programme implementation, and creating feedback channels that help the state better understand real constraints to local development.



## 13. Recommendations

The recommendations below, derived from the consolidated analysis, aim to increase the visibility of NPO contributions, improve data quality, develop sustainable partnership mechanisms, and shift from describing activities to assessing results. They are addressed to government institutions (including statistical agencies), NPOs themselves, donors, research organisations, and other actors involved in a possible regional agenda on civil society contribution.

### 13.1. For Government Institutions (Proposals for Further Development of Cross-Sectoral Partnership)

#### **Develop Systematic Accounting of the NPO Sector**

Government institutions should establish aggregated statistics on NPOs by introducing non-profit sector satellite accounts within national accounts systems. This would involve distinguishing between registered, operating, and actively functioning organisations and accounting for employment, wages, taxes, social contributions, financial flows, volunteer labour, and sources of funding. Such an approach would enable NPOs to be viewed as an independent development factor in specific sectors and would facilitate their inclusion in the design and implementation of government strategies, programmes, and plans. In addition to aggregated statistics, enhanced data exchange between justice authorities, tax authorities, statistical agencies, and relevant line ministries would allow for clearer differentiation between registered, operating, and active NPOs, yielding a fuller picture of employment, financing, taxation, services, volunteer labour, and beneficiary outreach.

#### **Shift from Counting Activities to Assessing Results**

In systems of public financing, social contracting, grants, and joint programmes, emphasis should move beyond the number of activities and participants toward measurable changes for beneficiaries, services, communities, and governance institutions. This will require clearer results indicators, systematic feedback from service users, and regular analysis of the sustainability of achieved outcomes.

#### **Make Broader Use of NPO Capacity to Provide Local-Level Data**

NPOs possess rich, practical information on population needs, barriers to service access, the situation of vulnerable groups, and challenges in reform implementation at the local level. Government institutions would benefit from systematically incorporating this information into programme monitoring, service evaluation, consultations on regulatory acts, and the planning of support measures — particularly for rural, remote, and socially vulnerable populations.

#### **Develop Domestic Mechanisms for NPO Financing**

In countries with limited domestic support mechanisms, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan among them, it is essential to develop more sustainable financing instruments for NPO services, including expanded social contracting, grant programmes, co-financing schemes, local support programmes, and multi-year agreements for specialised services. Such measures would reduce the dependence of critically important services on short-term external funding. It is equally important to establish national financing mechanisms for NPO advisory and expert services, which are currently funded almost exclusively from external sources despite strong domestic demand.



## **Support Local and Community-Based NPOs**

NPOs operating outside capital cities and major urban centres, as well as those working directly with local needs and vulnerable groups, require targeted support. Effective instruments include small grants, simplified access to funding, regional support funds (for example, grant pools linked to subnational development funds), advisory assistance, and the reduction of excessive administrative requirements.

## **Development of Multi-Year and Institutional Financing (For Government Institutions and Donors)**

Short-term project financing often undermines the sustainability of results, services, staff retention, and monitoring systems. For organisations delivering public-benefit services or working with hard-to-reach groups, multi-year agreements, support for core operating costs, institutional development of social contracting, and dedicated financing for organisational strengthening are particularly valuable.

## **Use NPO Potential to Improve the Investment Climate at the Local Level**

Government institutions should more systematically leverage the knowledge of NPOs beyond the social sphere — particularly in identifying barriers that constrain territorial development, entrepreneurship, and private initiative. This includes insights on access to information, quality of local services, infrastructure gaps, population skills, and practical feedback on programme implementation.

## **Take NPO Signals into Account, Not Only Those of Business Associations, When Improving Private Sector Development Programmes**

When designing and adjusting programmes to support entrepreneurship, employment, self-employment, and local development, it is important to incorporate practical information from NPOs. While business associations primarily represent established enterprises, NPOs gather data directly from the population, communities, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Integrating these perspectives would allow for more accurate, targeted measures and help bridge the gap between formal reforms and their real-world implementation.

## **Assess Not Only NPO Participation, but Also Its Contribution to Improving the Business Environment**

To enhance governance quality, it is essential to track not merely the number of consultations, agreements, or projects involving NPOs, but the tangible outcomes of such participation: improvements in services and infrastructure, reduction of barriers for entrepreneurs, greater predictability in implementation, and the emergence of more sustainable conditions for economic activity.

## **13.2. For NPOs**

### **Develop Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainable Operating Models**

NPOs should strengthen their internal monitoring and evaluation capacities, adopt basic results indicators, and pursue social entrepreneurship, partial self-financing, and partnerships with businesses and local authorities. These steps will enhance organisational sustainability and enable clearer demonstration of contributions beyond individual projects.

### **Better Document Results and Changes for Beneficiaries**

NPOs should reinforce self-assessment mechanisms and systematic data collection on who receives assistance, what services are delivered, what changes occur following support, and which barriers have been reduced. It is important to document both outreach and outcomes - including improved access to services, employment gains, reduced vulnerability, changes in institutional practices, policy decisions adopted, and the sustainability of established services.



## **Publish Aggregated Reports that Are Clear to the Wider Public**

Public reporting should address not only donors and government institutions but also citizens. Short, accessible reports featuring key figures, stories of change, transparent descriptions of expenditures, results, and partnerships would help build broader trust in the sector and increase the visibility of NPO contributions to society, businesses, and local communities. Such reporting is most effective when produced in aggregated format rather than solely by individual large organisations. To demonstrate national geographic and thematic coverage, NPOs should self-organise to compile and publish clear, citizen-friendly aggregated reports based on a simple yet robust system of contribution and impact indicators.

## **Demonstrate Contribution to the Investment Climate and Private Sector Development**

NPOs should more systematically document not only social outcomes and outreach but also their role in improving the economic environment — through skills development, entrepreneurship support, reduction of local barriers, participation in infrastructure and service improvements, and the creation of more predictable conditions for local economic activity.

## **Link Social Results More Clearly with Economic Effects**

When presenting results, it is important to highlight how social and educational projects translate into tangible economic outcomes: employment and self-employment, income growth, cost reduction, improved decision-making for small businesses, and more favourable conditions for local investment.

## **13.3. For Development Partners**

### **Support the Institutional Development of NPOs**

Development partners should finance organisational strengthening alongside project activities. Priority areas should include monitoring and evaluation systems, digital beneficiary records, public reporting, financial management, communications, staff retention, and the development of regional networks.

### **Support Impact Assessment and Comparable Indicators**

Impact assessment should be integrated into project and programme financing. Development partners can help standardise basic indicators, develop common data collection tools, finance independent evaluations, and support regional exchange of methodologies. This would enable more meaningful comparison of results across countries and sectors.

Development partners should support not only service delivery and social projects but also initiatives that improve the broader development environment: entrepreneurial skills, local infrastructure, digital access, service sustainability, feedback mechanisms, and projects that positively influence the local investment climate and private sector development.

## **13.4. For Research Organizations**

### **Develop Methodologies for Assessing NPO Contribution**

Research organisations should adapt assessment methodologies to the diversity of NPO types - service-providing, human rights-oriented, expert, charitable, local, network-based, and social enterprise models. Assessment should not be limited to GDP, taxes, and employment figures. Instead, it should combine institutional indicators, functional contributions, qualitative characteristics, and compelling stories of change. Methodologies for qualitative assessment of social impact should also be developed, balancing outreach and activity volume with deeper changes in people's lives.



Research organisations should complement evaluations of social and institutional contributions with analysis of NPOs' influence on the investment climate and private sector development. Relevant indicators may include skills development, support for self-employment and SMEs, improvements in local services and infrastructure, reduction of barriers to economic activity, and increased predictability in the implementation of development programmes.

## 13.5. For a Joint Regional Agenda

### Developing a Common Knowledge Base and Set of Indicators

Countries in the region and partner organisations would benefit from establishing a common set of indicators (as proposed in Annex 3), a regional database of cases, methodological guidance for assessing NPO contribution, and a platform for exchanging practices. Such an agenda could be advanced through existing or new consultative formats involving civil society platforms, research organisations, and government partners.

At the regional level, a minimum set of comparable indicators should be developed to assess NPO contributions not only in the social sphere but also in improving broader development conditions - support for entrepreneurship, the local investment climate, infrastructure, service sustainability, and the quality of interaction among the state, businesses, and communities. This framework would make NPO contributions more comprehensible to economic ministries, businesses, and development partners.

### Strengthening International Cooperation among NPOs in the Region and Beyond

NPOs in Central Asian countries should more actively pursue exchange of experience, joint learning, thematic networks, and partnerships with organisations both within the region and internationally. Such cooperation would accelerate the dissemination of successful practices, enable comparison of results-assessment approaches, develop common data standards, strengthen professional competencies, and support joint initiatives on cross-border and regional issues.

### Engage in Cross-Sectoral Cooperation Platforms at the Regional Level

NPOs should capitalise on the political will expressed by regional leaders in the "Central Asia 2040" Concept by actively participating in regional cooperation platforms that include actors from other sectors, particularly government institutions. It is through such platforms that NPO contributions can gain greater visibility, recognition, and effectiveness. Special attention should be given to platforms addressing cross-cutting issues. Given NPOs' distinctive "delivery" function - bringing development to remote, excluded, and vulnerable territories - they are well positioned to become key partners of the planned Central Asian Council on Local Self-Government and Local Development (expected to be established in 2026). This Council is anticipated to focus, among other priorities, on expanding and improving development practices in remote, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable areas.

The recommendations presented above are not a simple compilation of those contained in the country reports. They reflect overarching regional considerations related to assessing and strengthening NPO contributions. Country-specific recommendations are available in the respective country reports. For general reference, key country-level emphases for implementing these overall recommendations are summarised below.



## 13.6. Country-Level Emphases for Consideration in Implementing the Recommendations



### Kazakhstan

Develop inter-agency integration of data on NPOs, combining registration data, statistical information, tax authority records, state social contracting, grant financing, and social services data. Consider the introduction of a non-profit sector satellite account and a methodology for accounting for volunteer labour. Strengthen independent assessment of project results to shift emphasis from counting activities and outreach toward evaluating sustainable changes in beneficiaries' lives.



### Kyrgyzstan

Consider the introduction of a non-profit sector satellite account and a methodology for accounting for volunteer labour. Establish a sustainable mechanism for regular assessment of NPO contributions to the economy, governance, and social development. Ensure public aggregation of data on employment, taxes, financial inflows, procurement, and gross value added of the sector. Develop NPO self-assessment and public reporting on the results of statutory activities so that measurable institutional contributions are complemented by more visible assessments of social and qualitative changes.



### Uzbekistan

Alongside the development of the NPO portal, government grants, social contracting, territorial funds, and public councils, it is important to strengthen regional NPOs, reduce excessive administrative burdens, introduce multi-year financing, and scale successful practices. Particular emphasis should be placed on public recognition of NPOs. Citizens need a clearer understanding of the practical role of the sector, and public reporting on results should be developed so that NPO contributions do not dissolve into the broader agenda of the state, mahalla, or large charitable structures, but remain visible as an independent contribution of the civil society sector.



### Tajikistan

Support expert participation of NPOs in inter-agency working groups, strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation of government programmes. Develop mechanisms for recording NPO proposals and providing transparent feedback on their acceptance or rejection. Strengthen regional networks, social entrepreneurship, digital visibility of organisations, and the "delivery" function of bringing development to remote, excluded, and vulnerable groups and territories, particularly in areas requiring long-term expertise. Consider the introduction of a non-profit sector satellite account and a methodology for accounting for volunteer labour.



### Turkmenistan

Develop aggregated sector reviews and access to anonymised data that allow for a better understanding of the contribution of public organisations without violating national procedures on access to information. Develop qualitative indicators of social impact, especially in social protection, youth policy, culture, environment, professional development, and support for persons with disabilities. Support the exchange of practices between the capital and the regions so that the sector's contribution is assessed not only through projects but also through its socio-institutional role in implementing state priorities at the local level.



## Annexes

### Annex 1. List of References and Sources for the Literature Review

See the section (Literature Review)

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## Annex 3. Summary Indicators of NPO Contribution in Central Asia (Estimates; not official statistical data)

**Table. Available Quantitative Indicators of the Institutional Contribution of NPOs by Central Asian Country**

| Total in CA: 56 240                                               |                                                                                              |                                                                                              |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Indicator                                                         |  Kazakhstan |  Kyrgyzstan |  Tajikistan                          |  Turkmenistan |  Uzbekistan                           |
| <b>Registered / recorded organizations</b>                        | More than <b>23,000</b> registered NPOs                                                      | <b>21,399</b> NPOs in the target group of the study; 4,548 submitted statistical reports     | <b>1,700</b> organizations and <b>411</b> branches and representative offices; 968 organizations in the target group  | <b>138</b> public organizations                                                                  | Around <b>10,000</b> NGNPOs; more than <b>11,600</b> NGNPOs including subdivisions, branches, and representative offices |
| <b>Operating / actively functioning organizations</b>             | <b>17,964</b> active NPOs in the database as of the end of 2024                              | <b>397</b> most active organizations                                                         | <b>105</b> organizations from the target group submitted financial reports; 69 CSOs were included in the study sample | All <b>138</b> organizations are considered active and submit reports                            | N/A; the category of actually operating / active NGNPOs is not separately identified                                     |
| <b>Number of employees</b>                                        | <b>97,758</b> in 2024; the NPO database separately indicates 40,000 full-time staff          | <b>24,414</b> employees                                                                      | <b>1,200</b> jobs in operating organizations of the target group                                                      | N/A for the entire sector                                                                        | More than <b>70,000</b> people                                                                                           |
| <b>Women among employees</b>                                      | N/A                                                                                          | 14,158 women out of 24,414 average payroll employees                                         | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                              | N/A                                                                                                                      |
| <b>External part-time workers / engaged specialists</b>           | N/A; in the NPO database, the line on engaged specialists is marked “—”                      | 4,857 external part-time workers                                                             | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                              | N/A                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Volunteers / unpaid workers</b>                                | 107,000 volunteers                                                                           | 5,411 unpaid workers / volunteers                                                            | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A for the entire sector; individual cases are available                                        | N/A                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Total number of people involved in the sector's activities</b> | 97 758 employees under OKED and 107,000 volunteers according to the NPO database             | 34 682 people                                                                                | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                              | More than 70,000 employees; volunteers are not separately identified                                                     |
| <b>Average wage</b>                                               | 318 853 KZT (USD 664) per month in 2024                                                      | KGS 27,605 (USD 317) per month                                                               | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                              | UZS 4,308,379 per month, or approximately USD 345                                                                        |
| <b>Payroll fund</b>                                               | KZT 374,084.5 billion (USD 773.1 million) in 2024 under OKED 94.99.0                         | N/A as a ready-made indicator in the materials                                               | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                              | N/A                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Taxes and social contributions</b>                             | N/A; access to tax data is limited due to confidentiality                                    | Approximately KGS 1.3 billion, or around USD 15 million, in 2024.                            | Approximately TJS 4 million in the sample of 69 CSOs, or more than USD 440,000                                        | N/A; the report indicates the absence of public macro-statistics for calculation                 | N/A; comparable data on contributions are not separately identified                                                      |
| <b>Gross value added</b>                                          | N/A                                                                                          | KGS 10,558,725.1 thousand, or more than USD 120 million                                      | N/A                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                              | N/A                                                                                                                      |



## NPOs in Central Asia:

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| Indicator                                                           |  Kazakhstan                             |  Kyrgyzstan                                                |  Tajikistan                                                   |  Turkmenistan |  Uzbekistan                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Share of NPOs in GDP</b>                                         | N/A                                                                                                                      | 0.67% of GDP in 2024                                                                                                                        | N/A                                                                                                                                            | N/A                                                                                              | N/A                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Total financial inflows / turnover</b>                           | N/A for the entire sector; separate financing mechanisms are available                                                   | Approximately KGS 53 billion in 2024, or around USD 609 million; for the target group, KGS 14.2 billion, or approximately USD 161.7 million | TJS 53.3 million in the sample of 69 CSOs, or nearly USD 6 million                                                                             | N/A for the entire sector                                                                        | UZS 34,350.3 trillion in 2024, or approximately USD 2.8 billion                                                                                                       |
| <b>Foreign technical assistance / grants</b>                        | N/A for the entire sector                                                                                                | KGS 2.7 billion, or approximately USD 30.5 million; 19% of revenues                                                                         | TJS 39.7 million, or approximately USD 4.4 million; 74.5% of the budget of the sample of 69 CSOs                                               | 22 grant-funded projects worth approximately USD 1.2 million in 2024                             | UZS 1,206.5 billion, or approximately USD 100 million; 3.5%                                                                                                           |
| <b>Government / local budget support</b>                            | State Social Contracting: 2,167 projects worth KZT 33.56 billion (USD 69.9 million) in 2024; grant financing exceeds KZT | Approximately KGS 0.2 billion, or around USD 1.8 million; 1% of revenues                                                                    | TJS 3.57 million, or approximately USD 400,000; 7% came from funds received under contracts for the implementation of State Social Contracting | No comparable line available                                                                     | UZS 718 billion, or nearly USD 60 million, over seven years; 1,600 projects worth UZS 83 billion, or nearly USD 7 million, through territorial funds over three years |
| <b>Procurement of goods and services / contribution to SMEs</b>     | N/A                                                                                                                      | More than KGS 917 million, or around USD 10.5 million, for the organization of seminars, training sessions, and roundtables alone           | N/A                                                                                                                                            | N/A                                                                                              | N/A                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Number of projects under government / territorial mechanisms</b> | 2,167 projects in 2024 worth KZT 33,562.8 million (USD 69.9 million)                                                     | N/A as a single indicator                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                                                                            | 22 grant-funded projects in 2024                                                                 | 1,600 projects through territorial funds over the past three years                                                                                                    |
| <b>Beneficiaries / sector-wide outreach</b>                         | N/A as a single indicator; individual cases are available                                                                | N/A as a single indicator; individual cases are available                                                                                   | 250,000 beneficiaries annually, based on the sample of 69 CSOs                                                                                 | N/A as a single indicator; individual cases are available                                        | N/A as a single indicator; individual cases are available                                                                                                             |



## Annex 4. Proposed Three-Level System of Indicators for Assessing NPO Contribution

A unified system of indicators for assessing NPO contribution is essential to overcome the current fragmentation of data on the sector's activities. At present, information on NPOs is most often presented in the form of project reports, individual case studies, financial data, departmental statistics, or descriptive accounts of activities. This makes aggregation difficult and prevents a consistent demonstration of the sector's overall contribution to development. Unified indicators establish a common language for assessment. They enable the recording of basic sector parameters, resource base, functions, outreach, results for beneficiaries, and changes at the level of communities, services, and governance institutions. Such a system increases the visibility of NPO contributions to the state, society, businesses, and donors, reduces the risk of underestimating the sector, and provides a foundation for more regular, comparable, and evidence-based presentation of its public value.

For assessing NPO contribution, a three-level system of indicators is recommended. This approach distinguishes between basic sector accounting, functional contribution, and more complex impact assessment. The logic aligns with international standards for non-profit organisation statistics, volunteer labour measurement, and results-based development management.

### Level 1. Basic Sector Accounting (Institutional Contribution)

This level provides an understanding of the size, structure, and resource base of the NPO sector. It follows the international logic of satellite accounts for non-profit institutions, treating the sector as part of the economy through employment, output/services, wages, income sources, expenditures, volunteer labour, and institutional classification.

#### Minimum indicators:

- |                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Number of registered NPOs;                                                | • Volume of cash inflows;                                                                                                                                      |
| • Number of operating NPOs;                                                 | • Volume of funds used;                                                                                                                                        |
| • Number of actively functioning NPOs (where identifiable);                 | • Sources of funding (state budget, local budgets, donors, donations, membership fees, paid services, income-generating activities, etc.) by amount and share; |
| • Distribution of NPOs by organisational and legal form (number and share); | • Volume of procurement of goods and services;                                                                                                                 |
| • Distribution of NPOs by sector of activity (number and share);            | • Number of projects and programmes (total, by type of activity and sector; number and share);                                                                 |
| • Number of full-time employees;                                            | • Number of beneficiaries (total, by type of activity and sector; number and share);                                                                           |
| • Number of engaged experts and consultants;                                | • Regional coverage of activities (number of projects and beneficiaries by region; number and share);                                                          |
| • Number of volunteers;                                                     | • Share of organisations publishing open reports.                                                                                                              |
| • Volume of volunteer labour (hours or full-time equivalent);               |                                                                                                                                                                |
| • Payroll fund;                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                |
| • Average wage in the sector;                                               |                                                                                                                                                                |
| • Taxes and social contributions;                                           |                                                                                                                                                                |



## Level 2. Functional Contribution

This level shows what NPOs actually do for people, communities, the state, and the economy. It captures the main roles of organisations: service provision, rights protection, participation in policy-making, public monitoring, resource mobilisation, work with vulnerable groups, social entrepreneurship, local initiatives, and other functions.

### Indicators of functional contribution:

- ❁ Number of beneficiaries by main groups (children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, low-income families, survivors of violence, patients with severe and chronic diseases, residents of rural and remote areas, and other relevant groups), by number and share;
- ❁ Share of beneficiaries from vulnerable groups;
- ❁ Number of services provided in rural and remote areas (number and share of total services);
- ❁ Number of social, legal, psychological, educational, rehabilitation, and advisory services provided;
- ❁ Number and share of services by main categories of activity, including:
- ❁ Cases of assistance in obtaining documents, payments, services, or legal protection;
- ❁ Number of people receiving free legal aid;
- ❁ Number of crisis, rehabilitation, semi-residential, and specialised services;
- ❁ Number of trained specialists, volunteers, parents, entrepreneurs, or community representatives;
- ❁ Number of participants in employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship programmes;
- ❁ Number of start-ups, social enterprises, and local initiatives created or supported;
- ❁ Number of jobs created or supported for beneficiaries;
- ❁ Volume of resources mobilised by NPOs for government, social, or local programmes;
- ❁ Number of NPO proposals submitted to strategies, programmes, laws, and regulatory acts;
- ❁ Number of working groups, councils, hearings, and consultation platforms involving NPOs;
- ❁ Number of monitoring exercises, public expert reviews, and assessments conducted by NPOs;
- ❁ Number of NPO recommendations reviewed by government institutions;
- ❁ Number of NPO recommendations reflected in programmes, regulatory acts, or practical decisions;
- ❁ Number of local initiatives implemented with community participation.

### NPO contribution to the investment climate and private sector development:

- ❁ Number of NPO programmes and initiatives aimed at developing entrepreneurship, self-employment, and economic skills;
- ❁ Number of beneficiaries supported in entering entrepreneurial activity;
- ❁ Number of local service and infrastructure solutions implemented with NPO participation;
- ❁ Number of cases where NPO participation improved the quality of implementation of entrepreneurship support or local development programmes;
- ❁ Number of practices where NPO participation contributed to reducing barriers to local economic activity;
- ❁ Number of sustainable models of local management of services and infrastructure affecting economic conditions;
- ❁ Number of NPO partnerships with government institutions, local self-government bodies, businesses, and educational organisations on private sector development and the local economy.



### Level 3. Assessment of Results and Impact

This level demonstrates the changes resulting from NPO activities: improved access to services, reduced vulnerability, increased employment and income, enhanced quality of life, institutional improvements, and sustainability of results.

In the international logic of results-based management, these indicators focus on longer-term outcomes and impact.

#### Possible indicators of results and impact:

- ❁ Change in the share of beneficiaries gaining access to required services;
- ❁ Reduction in time or cost required to obtain a service;
- ❁ Share of beneficiaries completing the full support pathway;
- ❁ Share of beneficiaries maintaining positive results after 6–12 months;
- ❁ Share of people who restored documents, rights, or access to social support;
- ❁ Share of legal aid recipients achieving a resolution of their issue;
- ❁ Change in beneficiaries' awareness of rights and available services;
- ❁ Change in the level of independence of persons with disabilities or other target groups;
- ❁ Change in employment or self-employment rates among programme participants;
- ❁ Change in income of participants in economic programmes;
- ❁ Number of beneficiaries who launched or expanded a small business;
- ❁ Share of social enterprises or start-ups still operating after 12 months;
- ❁ Improved access to water, infrastructure, education, healthcare, or social services in target communities (as a share of identified need);
- ❁ Change in beneficiary satisfaction with the quality of assistance;
- ❁ Reduction in repeat requests for assistance on the same problem in crisis services;
- ❁ Change in the practice of a government institution, public agency, or local administration as a result of NPO proposals;
- ❁ Number of laws, strategies, programmes, or regulatory acts adopted with NPO participation;
- ❁ Number of NPO services or models included in state social contracting or regular financing;
- ❁ Number of successful practices scaled to other territories or organisations;
- ❁ Existence of functioning feedback mechanisms from beneficiaries and communities;
- ❁ Existence of regular public reporting on results and changes.

When implementing such a system, it is important not to impose equally complex reporting requirements on all NPOs. For small local organisations, basic accounting and a limited number of functional contribution indicators are sufficient. For large service-providing, expert, or network organisations, expanded results indicators may be applied. Impact assessment can be used selectively for large programmes, sustainable services, innovative models, and areas receiving government or donor financing.



## Annex 5. Level of Data Reliability

| Country                                                                                           | What Can Be Stated with Confidence                                                                                | What Requires Caution                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>Kazakhstan   | Number of active NPOs, employment, volunteers, State Social Contracting, social services                          | Tax contribution and precise exclusion of organizations outside the focus of the study |
| <br>Kyrgyzstan   | Share in GDP, employment, taxes, financial inflows, procurement                                                   | Long-term outcomes for beneficiaries                                                   |
| <br>Uzbekistan   | Registration, employment, financial inflows, government support                                                   | Distinction between registered and actually active NGNPOs                              |
| <br>Tajikistan   | Expert participation, data from the sample of 69 CSOs                                                             | Extrapolation to the entire sector                                                     |
| <br>Turkmenistan | Number of registered organizations, individual projects, and examples of employment for persons with disabilities | Macroeconomic contribution, taxes, total financial flows                               |

## Annex 6. International Experience in Measuring the Contribution of the Non-Profit Sector to the Economy and Employment

### Why Do Countries Measure the Contribution of NPOs?

In many countries, non-profit organisations are viewed not only as civil society institutions but also as significant economic actors that create jobs, produce public-benefit services, mobilise resources, and generate value added.

Traditional government statistics have long struggled to capture the full scale of this contribution. To address this gap, the United Nations Statistical Commission developed specific recommendations for integrating non-profit organisations into the System of National Accounts (SNA), including the use of satellite accounts for the non-profit sector and volunteer activity. This approach enables the assessment of:

-  The contribution of NPOs to gross value added (GVA);
-  Their contribution to gross domestic product (GDP);
-  Employment and wages;
-  The income and expenditure structure of organisations;
-  The contribution of volunteer activity;
-  The role of the sector in specific branches of the economy and the social sphere.

### International Statistical Framework

Modern approaches are grounded in UN recommendations and the practices of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The central idea is that the non-profit sector should be made visible in official statistics on a par with the public sector, business, or households.

Countries are progressively moving from simply counting registered organisations toward a comprehensive assessment of their economic and social contribution.



## International Experience

**Table X. Examples of Countries Assessing the Contribution of the Non-Profit Sector**

| Country           | GVA / Contribution to GDP | Employment | Volunteer Labour | Features of Practice                                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Canada            | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | One of the most developed satellite accounts for NPOs                |
| Australia         | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | Regular assessment of the sector's economic and social contribution  |
| New Zealand       | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | Emphasis on volunteering and local communities                       |
| Norway            | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | Systematic accounting of the contribution of voluntary organisations |
| Finland           | Yes                       | Yes        | Partially        | Integration of NPO data into social statistics                       |
| Netherlands       | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | Developed system for accounting for public-benefit activities        |
| Belgium           | Yes                       | Yes        | Partially        | Use of data for analysing the social economy                         |
| France            | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | Accounting for associations and social economy organisations         |
| Czech Republic    | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | Regular publication of data on the sector                            |
| Portugal          | Yes                       | Yes        | Yes              | National satellite account for the social economy                    |
| Republic of Korea | Yes                       | Yes        | Partially        | Use of data to assess public impact                                  |

**Source:** UN recommendations on accounting for non-profit organizations, national statistical offices, and international OECD reviews of practice.

### Canada: An Example of Comprehensive Statistical Accounting

Canada is widely regarded as one of the global leaders in the statistical accounting of the non-profit sector. Statistics Canada regularly publishes detailed data on:

- ❁ The contribution of the non-profit sector to GDP;
- ❁ Employment and wages;
- ❁ The income and expenditure structure of organisations;
- ❁ Volunteer activity;
- ❁ The contribution of different areas of activity, including education, healthcare, culture, social services, and others.

These data are actively used in public policy development and allow the dynamics of the non-profit sector to be assessed on a comparable basis with other sectors of the economy.

### Australia and New Zealand: Accounting for Public Value

Australia and New Zealand place particular emphasis not only on economic indicators but also on the contribution of volunteers. National statistics assess:

- ❁ the number of volunteers;
- ❁ the volume of volunteer labour;
- ❁ the economic equivalent of volunteer activity;
- ❁ the contribution of public organizations to the development of local communities.



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This approach makes it possible to capture citizens' contribution, which is often invisible in traditional financial reporting.

### The Netherlands, Belgium, and France: Linkages with the Social Economy

In several European countries, the non-profit sector is analysed as part of the broader social economy. Statistics enable the assessment of:

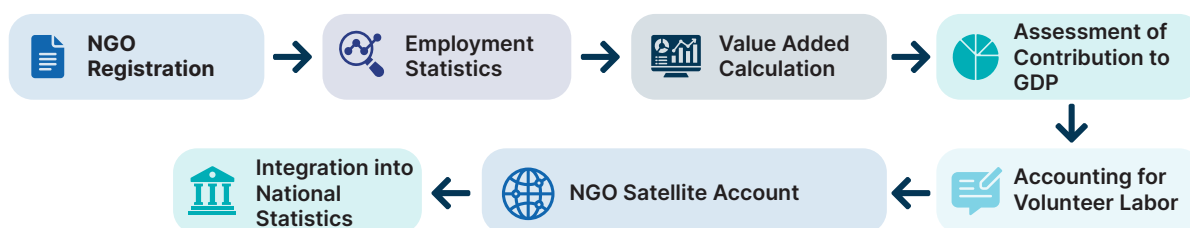
- The contribution of public organisations to employment;
- Integration of vulnerable population groups;
- Participation in the provision of social services;
- Participation in the production of public goods.
- Development of local communities;

This integrated approach provides a fuller understanding of the role of NPOs in the sustainable development of territories.

### Key Lessons from International Experience

Despite differences between countries, the development of a system for accounting for NPO contribution typically progresses through several consecutive stages.

#### EVOLUTION OF MEASURING NGOS' CONTRIBUTION



### What Could Be Useful for Central Asian Countries?

International experience demonstrates that the most realistic and practical steps for Central Asian countries include:

- Creating and regularly updating registers of active NPOs;
- Developing accounting for volunteer activity;
- Harmonising data from statistical, tax, and registration authorities;
- Preparing pilot satellite accounts for the non-profit sector;
- Regularly assessing employment and the payroll fund of the sector;
- Regularly publishing aggregated data on NPO contribution to the economy and social development.
- Calculating the gross value added of NPOs;

The experience of OECD countries shows that such measures make the contribution of the non-profit sector more visible to the state and society, improve the quality of decision-making, and foster a more objective understanding of the role of NPOs in national development.

