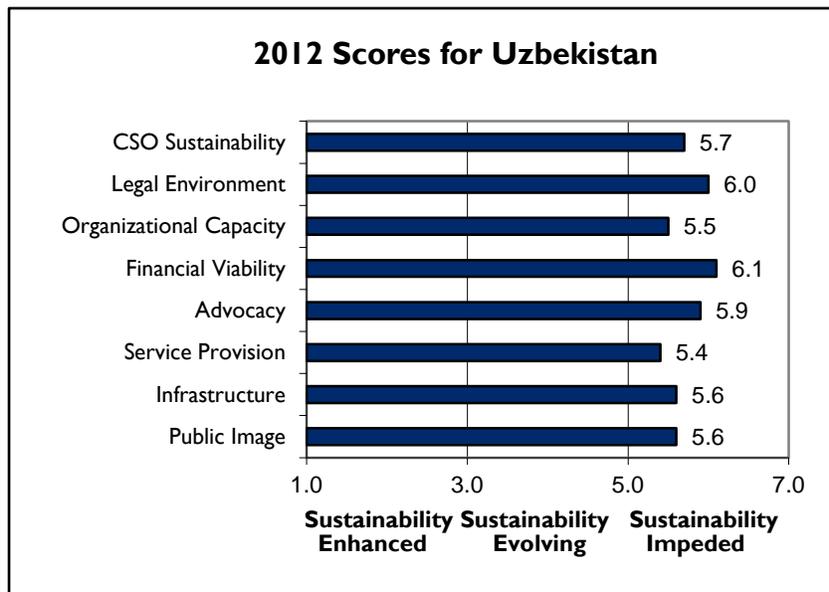


UZBEKISTAN



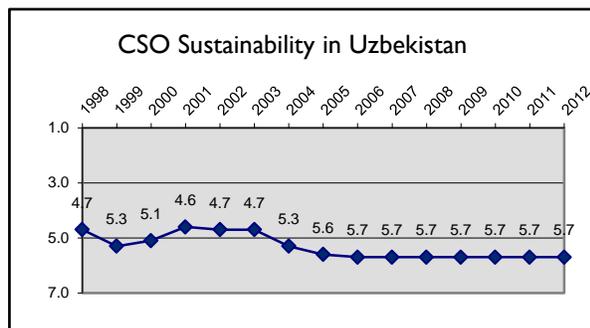
Capital: Tashkent

Population: 28,661,637

GDP per capita (PPP): \$3,500

Human Development Index: 114

CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 5.7



The operating environment for CSOs in Uzbekistan improved slightly in 2012. The national government continues to develop three key draft laws that the President has identified as priorities for improving the state of civil society in the country. These draft laws - on social partnership, social control, and openness of governmental bodies - contain many progressive provisions that will increase the role of civil society in government decision-making processes. While the laws have been discussed with civil society and other stakeholders, they have yet to be introduced in

parliament for adoption.

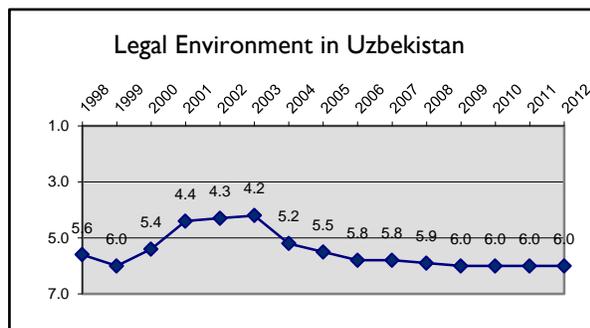
Unlike previous years, CSOs were able to successfully advocate on several topics in 2012. CSOs reported the greatest cooperation with the government on HIV/AIDS prevention and testing and the integration of populations already suffering from HIV/AIDS.

According to government officials, there were over 5,700 CSOs registered in Uzbekistan as of May 2012, an increase of 2.7 times since 2000. However, independent civil society experts argue that these numbers are misleading because they include mutual benefit organizations like associations of realtors and property managers. This number also includes GONGOs - leading Uzbek CSOs and their affiliates that represent government interests and thus are granted substantial financial support and government



endorsement of their activities - including Kamolot Public Youth Movement, Uzbekistan's Women Committee, Independent Institute to Monitor the Formation of Civil Society (NIMFOGO), Makhalla Fund, and the National Association of Non-governmental Non-commercial Organizations (NANNOUz). The number of operational CSOs is unknown.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 6.0



CSO registration continued to be problematic in 2012. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) frequently returns registration documents to CSOs, sometimes requesting modifications three or four times before approving applications. The MoJ has developed a new Law on Registration of Legal Entities, which is expected to simplify registration for all legal entities including CSOs, but it has not been adopted yet.

Civil society has been lobbying for the government to support women and youth organizations since 2004

and finally began to see results in 2012. During the year, the government encouraged women and youth organizations to register, and their applications were processed faster than before. CSO registration also improved slightly at the regional level. For example, in Karakalpakstan, the local authorities improved procedures for CSO registration, making the process relatively fast. More than 100 CSOs have since registered.

The national government continues to develop and discuss with civil society and other stakeholders three key draft laws identified by the President as priorities for improving the state of civil society in the country. The Law on Social Partnership is intended to foster cooperation among CSOs, government, and businesses in solving socio-economic problems by establishing cooperation councils that engage the public in the government's decision-making process. The draft law also envisions government support for social partnerships through grants and social contracts. The Law on Social Control aims to create mechanisms for civil society to monitor the implementation of legislation and control the activities of government agencies. The Law on Openness of Activities of Governmental Bodies is intended to provide guarantees for citizens' constitutional right to information and make the government responsible for its decisions.

In 2012, a Presidential Decree simplified reporting requirements for all organizations, including CSOs, and the MoJ introduced a less burdensome form of electronic reporting. Previously, CSOs had to submit twenty page reports monthly and forty page reports quarterly. Now CSOs only have to provide detailed reports on activities and funding once a year. Although they still must submit quarterly plans for the events they will organize and quarterly reports on events held, significantly less information is required. In 2012, large CSOs with entrepreneurial activities still had to submit monthly reports on their activities, but the frequency of this reporting was reduced to quarterly starting in January 2013.

Uzbek CSOs are allowed to engage in entrepreneurial activities, but must pay taxes on the income. CSOs are also legally allowed to compete for government contracts, but in reality only GONGOs win these awards. The Tax Code provides only a 1 percent deduction from taxable income for corporate donors, and does not provide any tax benefits for individual donors. Tax authorities frequently accuse CSOs of using funds improperly.

CSOs have a hard time finding legal support. Only one organization has in-depth knowledge of CSO laws and publishes books on the topic. Individual lawyers try to support CSOs, but do not have extensive knowledge on civil society issues because law schools do not offer specializations in civil society law. CSOs usually cannot afford the fees private lawyers charge.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 5.5

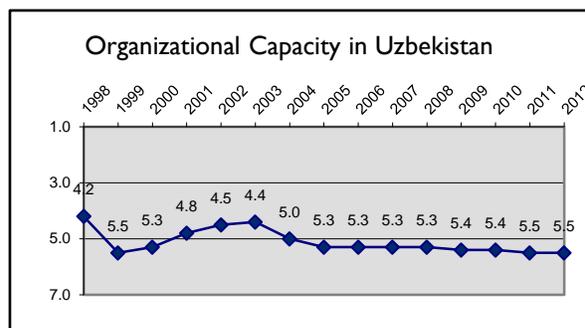
According to the Civil Code, once a CSO registers, it must engage in and report on its activities, or face liquidation. This requirement forces CSOs to search for funding immediately after registering.

Most CSOs are driven by beneficiary needs. Although many CSOs do not have strategic plans, they have well-articulated missions, largely focused on providing services to vulnerable groups.

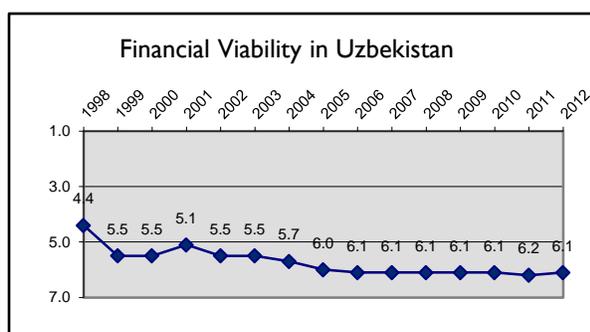
GONGOs generally receive substantial support from the government that allows them to retain fairly large staffs, engage in staff development, and develop sophisticated organizational management structures.

The staff of CSOs outside of Tashkent are generally untrained. While volunteerism is still not widespread, some CSOs seek volunteers to help with project implementation. Most volunteers are students seeking work experience or pensioners who want to stay active.

CSOs that do not receive government support often lack office equipment or supplies, so members use their personal computers and other items to serve their constituents. CSOs outside of Tashkent have limited access to international donor funding and thus fewer opportunities to upgrade their equipment. They also lack the financial resources to pay for Internet access. Many CSOs do not have websites, and smaller CSOs in the regions may not even have email addresses.



FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 6.1



Although civil society continues to have insufficient financial resources, government financing of CSOs increased in 2012. The Parliamentary Commission that manages public funding for CSOs and other civil society institutions ran several grant competitions to support social initiatives throughout the country this year. Around 560 CSOs submitted 713 applications to these competitions, and 1.5 billion soms (about \$752,100) were distributed among more than 100 projects. The Parliamentary Commission provided training to CSOs on how to apply for grants, allowing

many smaller, rural CSOs to receive funding for their activities in 2012. This differed from 2011 when most funds went to GONGOs. In addition to these competitively awarded grants, the government distributed 3 billion soms (approximately \$1.5 million) directly to large GONGOs.

Only a few international organizations fund CSOs in Uzbekistan, most of which prefer to work in areas other than democracy and civil society development. UNDP, UNICEF, and OSCE work on children's rights, women's rights, or economic security and hire civil society leaders on short-term consultancy bases rather than providing small grants directly to CSOs. International donor funding still must go through the central government-controlled grants committee, which may refuse to release funds awarded to civil society groups in Uzbekistan. In general, CSOs outside of Tashkent have more limited access to international donor funding.

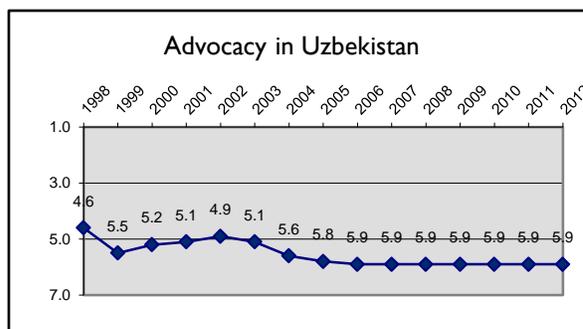
Although CSOs market their activities and causes to businesses, there are limited tax incentives for businesses to support civil society. Businesses rarely hire CSOs to provide services like consulting, research, or policy

analysis. Local authorities often ask businesses to provide support to community events or celebrations that might involve CSOs, usually GONGOs. This is especially common around Navruz, a state holiday when businesses and people are expected to contribute to community activities.

ADVOCACY: 5.9

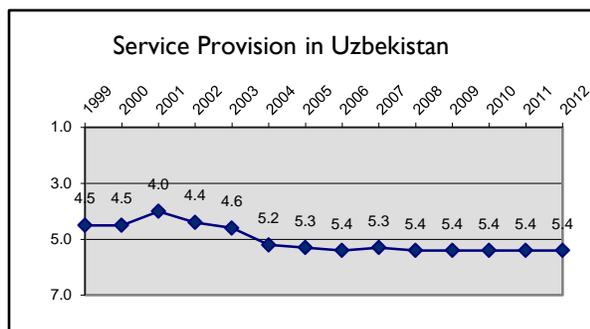
Communication between civil society and government officials improved in 2012. Government officials have requested CSO leaders to give presentations about highly technical areas in order to increase government expertise in these areas. CSOs focusing on HIV/AIDS, anti-trafficking, and the environment claim that various government ministries approach them almost daily.

CSO advocacy has also improved. The government requested CSO comments on nearly every piece of draft legislation and policy in 2012. CSOs also helped facilitate public discussions of draft laws. For example, civil society actively participated in nearly 300 roundtables and discussions of the laws on social partnership and public control organized by the MoJ. A negative aspect of this new engagement is that the government expects CSOs to provide their expertise for free.



Sometimes CSOs can engage in advocacy during events organized by the government or government-affiliated institutions. For example, in 2012, many CSOs from Tashkent participated in a seminar organized by the Ombudsman of Uzbekistan. At the seminar, CSOs were able to discuss how to strengthen the work of the Ombudsman and propose relevant amendments to the Law on Ombudsman.

SERVICE PROVISION: 5.4



CSO service provision is fairly developed in Uzbekistan. In particular, many organizations work on women's issues, entrepreneurship, healthcare, integration of people with disabilities, and anti-trafficking. However, the government still restricts CSO activities in certain areas, such as education, tuberculosis, and other sensitive issues.

CSO services do not always respond to real needs. For instance, despite a major emphasis on women's issues by the government in 2012, no CSO addressed the

issue of early marriage in Uzbekistan. This is partly because CSOs are prohibited from conducting public surveys or openly meeting with students in colleges and educational institutes to gather information on when women get married.

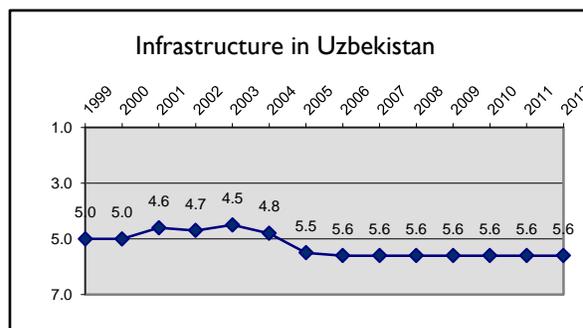
Service organizations rarely charge fees. Many beneficiaries, such as the disabled, cannot afford to pay fees for services. Most CSOs recover their costs through grants from international organizations or through the use of volunteers. For example, child physiologists work pro bono with a CSO for disabled children.

While the government utilizes the expertise of highly specialized CSOs to provide lectures to public servants or to develop curricula in different technical areas, government agencies never pay CSOs for their professional services.

INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.6

Regional CSO resource centers financed by NANNOUz and NIMFOGO exist in many parts of the country, but no independent civil society support centers operate in the regions. Some of these regional centers offer Internet access, while others just offer space for meetings.

CSOs frequently form coalitions in Uzbekistan. NANNOUz, which unites nearly 400 organizations, is the largest coalition in the country. No independent CSO coalitions were created in 2012.

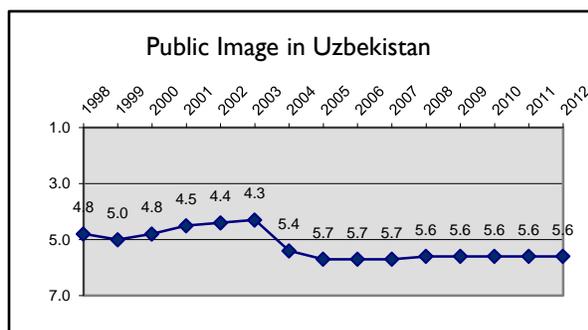


Over the years, international donors trained a strong cadre of CSO trainers, but the number of qualified trainers has diminished. Training is strongly needed, as leaders of new CSOs do not understand how to manage multiple projects, ensure organizational sustainability, or engage communities in their activities. In 2012, NANNOUz provided some training for rural CSOs on the organization of CSO activities, as well as discussions of the draft laws on social partnership, social control, and openness of governmental bodies, but these also took place in Tashkent. Because trainings do not cover meals or travel costs, many CSOs outside Tashkent cannot afford to send their staff to them. As a result, these trainings do not always benefit the organizations that need them most.

The availability of training resources remains limited. No new textbooks or manuals were published in the Uzbek language on organizational management, strategic planning, program evaluation, or volunteer recruitment in 2012. CSOs outside Tashkent lack the financial resources to pay for Internet access, preventing them from accessing online CSO training materials. The lack of Internet access for CSOs outside Tashkent also hinders their ability to network with CSOs in the capital.

Intersectoral partnerships involving independent CSOs are rare, although GONGOs collaborate actively with the government on national events promoting the rights and protection of vulnerable women and children and other social issues.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 5.6



In 2012, CSOs received fairly positive coverage in electronic and print media, both nationally and at the local level. Media coverage increased this year, although reporting continues to focus on CSO activities, rather than the sector's impact in society.

Several large conferences and events organized by international organizations, GONGOs, and independent civil society groups in 2012 helped raise public awareness of important issues and unite citizens for joint action. For example, the Fund Forum, Public

Association Women's Council, Social Initiatives Support Fund, and the UN Information Center, in collaboration with other local partners, held a series of events commemorating the International Day of Peace in Tashkent and the regions. Similarly, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan organized a forum to promote partnership among state, public, and international organizations and constructive discussion of the role of civil society in fighting the spread of HIV and promoting tolerance of those infected. Both events were well covered by the media.

GONGOs are better equipped than other CSOs to distribute news and information about their programs. For example, the Women's Committee launched its own press service and website in 2012 to provide information on its activities, available statistics, analytical information, and news. CSO leaders were more aware in 2012 of the benefits of networking online and using social media and mailing lists to distribute information about their work.

There is no polling data available to assess public support for CSO activities in Uzbekistan. However, it appears that much of the public remains unaware of CSO activities in the country.

CSOs do not have a sector-wide code of ethics, although individual organizations address ethical issues within their charters and procedures. CSOs do not promote transparency by publishing annual programmatic or financial reports, partly because the cost of printing is high.