



# Activating the Potential of CSOs as Actors and Partners in the Governance, Accountability and Implementation of Rural Development Projects

13 districts

50 CSOs

200 Participatory  
Community  
Appraisals

400 Mahalla  
Committees

70 Rural  
Development  
Initiatives

With the support of the European Commission, **Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (EFCA) - Tajikistan** has been tasked to strengthen the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the design and implementation of rural development projects in Tajikistan by increasing collaboration between CSOs, government, and rural civil society structures and actors.

To this end, EFCA Tajikistan will support CSOs to gain the capacity to **form Mahalla Committees** and make them an accountable platform for governance while ensuring sustained participatory rural development. This will activate CSOs in Tajikistan in finding **innovative solutions to pressing issues in rural development**. In this capacity, the project will achieve improved rural development through financially viable and needs-based initiatives implemented in collaboration between CSOs and Mahalla Committees and other local authorities and relevant stakeholders.



**Stage 1:** EFCA Tajikistan provides 50 rural CSOs with intensive capacity building training to strengthen their ability to work with government, rural development, and sustainability.

To put the gained knowledge into practice EFCA invites participating CSOs to submit proposals for a grant that can only be accessed if the CSO demonstrates that they met with Mahalla Committees, local government and rural development stakeholders; reflected on the content of the training; and have experience implementing other rural development projects.



**Stage 2:** Proposals from 20 CSOs are selected and their representatives trained in carrying out Participatory Community Appraisals and developing Action Plans that identify community needs and opportunities holistically, inclusive of a range of rural development stakeholders (from local farmers to business owners to government representatives). In this Pilot Phase of the project, each CSO partners with one Mahalla Committee to realize a Rural Development Initiative which has received a pledge of from local investors living in or near the mahalla, and local government officials.

Pilot Phase CSOs submit final reports on their projects and scale up proposals that reflect CSOs' perception of their own progress towards resolving the issues identified in the Participatory Community Appraisals, and success in implementing their Actions Plans and Rural Development Initiatives.

**Stage 3:** 10 CSOs scale up their initiatives with their Committees in an additional five mahallas to implement additional Rural Development Initiatives, again securing government buy-in.

The holistic training program extends to this stage, providing the CSOs with the support necessary to ensure the long term sustainability of the Initiatives, Mahalla Committees and CSOs themselves.

Finally, the CSOs conduct Impact Assessments in their target mahallas to gauge changes in the situation locally since the Participatory Community Appraisals were conducted.

Throughout the project, CSOs hold roundtables, involving government, media and civil society, to lobby for policy recommendation in the field of rural development.