

Enabling Social Innovation in Czechia

Country Snapshot

Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." ¹

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Czechia's social innovation ecosystem.

-  Direct focus on social innovation  Connected but indirect focus on social innovation  No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Official Definition of Social Innovation

Czechia has **no formal legal definition** of social innovation. Public policy discourse generally follows the **EU working definition**, framing social innovation as new solutions that address social needs and foster collaboration ^{1,2}.

Government Body for Social Innovation

Responsibility for social innovation is **centralised within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)**.

- MoLSA leads social innovation and social economy policy through ESF/ESF+ programming ³.
- A **National Competence Centre for Social Innovation** was established in 2021 within MoLSA to pilot, scale and coordinate social innovation initiatives ⁴.

Government Strategy for Social Innovation

Czechia does not have a standalone national social innovation strategy.

- Social innovation priorities are embedded in **Czech Republic 2030**, which explicitly supports social and organisational innovations addressing regional and social challenges ⁵.
- ESF+ (2021–2027) requires dedicated funding for social innovation, which Czechia has integrated into **Operational Programme Employment+** ⁴.

Policies, Laws & Regulations

There is **no comprehensive legal framework** for social innovation or social enterprise.

Directly relevant frameworks:

- **Social cooperatives** are the only legally recognised social enterprise form (Business Corporations Act, 2014) ³.
- A **draft Law on the Social Economy** focuses on work-integration social enterprises ³.

Broader enabling frameworks:

- Civil Code reforms (2014) enabling non-profit economic activity ³.
- Socially responsible public procurement promoted by the Agency for Social Inclusion ³.

Official Statistics



Czechia does not collect SI-specific statistics.

- The **social economy employs ~3.3% of the workforce** ($\approx 163,000$ jobs) ³.
- Around **3,700 social enterprises** were estimated nationally (2018), mostly NGOs and de facto social enterprises ⁶.

Government Programs



Public support for social innovation is primarily **EU-funded**.

- **Operational Programme Employment / Employment+**: grants for pilot and scaling social innovation projects ⁴.
- **National Competence Centre for Social Innovation**: capacity-building, experimentation and policy learning ⁴.
- Regional ESF programs support local social enterprises and innovation ecosystems ³.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



Czechia has a diverse but fragmented ecosystem.

- **TESSEA ČR** – national thematic network for social economy and social enterprises ³.
- **SINEC Cluster** – regional social enterprise cluster (Moravian-Silesian Region) ⁷.
- **Ashoka Czech Republic** – supports leading social innovators ³.

Support Initiatives



Non-financial support focuses on incubation, mentoring and skills development.

- **Impact Hub (Czechia)** – incubation, acceleration and impact programs ⁸.
- **Spiralis** – leadership training and consultancy for social enterprises ⁸.
- University-linked innovation centres increasingly include social innovation themes ⁸.

Collaboration, Events & Awards



Collaboration is **project-based and ESF-driven**.

- Public–civil partnerships in employment, inclusion and community services ³.
- **Social Impact Award** and national social entrepreneurship awards raise visibility ⁸.
- Czechia participates actively in EU social innovation communities of practice ⁴.

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Social innovation financing is **public-sector-led**.

- **National Development Bank**: interest-free loans for social enterprises ².
- ESF/ESF+ grants remain the main funding source for social innovation projects ⁴.
- Corporate foundations and CSR grants play a complementary role ².

Financing Inclusiveness



Funding is **strongly targeted toward disadvantaged groups**.

- Priority groups include people with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and socially excluded communities ^{3 6}.
- Most financing supports **work-integration social enterprises** ⁶.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public awareness of the term “social innovation” remains **limited**, but visibility of social enterprises is increasing.

- Media coverage focuses on inclusive employment, community services and environmental initiatives ².
- Civic engagement and generosity increased sharply after 2020 ¹⁰.



Research

Research capacity is **moderate and growing**.

- Universities research social economy and social enterprise models ⁶.
- Contributions to EU and OECD social economy and social innovation studies ⁶ ¹¹.



Education

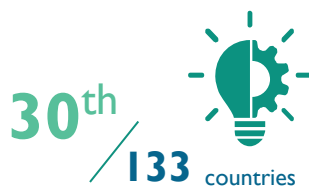
Education focuses on **social entrepreneurship rather than SI as a standalone field**. Accredited university courses on social economy and social entrepreneurship exist ¹² and informal education via incubators and accelerators is widespread ⁸.



Entrepreneurship



EIU Business Environment Ranking



Innovation Capacity

Global Innovation Index 2024 ¹³



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

General entrepreneurial conditions are moderately supportive



Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity



Political participation



Volunteering

One of the largest global increases in generosity ¹⁰.

World Giving Index 2022



Sustainability

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2022 ¹⁴