

Enabling Social Innovation in Finland

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 Finland'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



Finland's *Strategy for the Social Economy and Social Enterprises 2026–2030* defines "societal/social innovation" (yhteiskunnallinen innovointi) as developing and implementing new ideas that meet social needs while creating new social relationships and cross-sector collaboration. ²

Government Body for Social Innovation



Rather than a single dedicated unit, responsibilities are distributed across ministries and agencies:

- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (lead on social economy strategy) ²
- Ministry of Justice (civil society policy, including KANE) ^{3 4}
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (via STEA funding body) ⁵

Government Strategy for Social Innovation



While there is no standalone SI strategy, relevant elements appear in:

- *Strategy for the Social Economy and Social Enterprises 2026–2030* ²
- Civil Society Organisations Strategy ³
- National Public Procurement Strategy ⁶

Policies, Laws & Regulations



Finland relies on cross-cutting frameworks rather than SI-specific legislation:

- Public procurement policy integrates social and environmental objectives ⁶
- The Act on Social Enterprises (1351/2003) was repealed in 2023, signalling a shift away from registry-based approaches ⁷

Official Statistics



No dedicated SI statistical framework exists; however, the national strategy identifies this gap and prioritises improved measurement. ²
Adjacent data is available through the Finnish Patent and Registration Office Trade Register. ⁸

Government Programs



- Centre of Expertise for Social Enterprises (since 2021): advisory services, data development, scaling support ^{2 10}
- STEA grants: €373.6 million allocated in 2023 to social welfare and health organisations ⁵
- Social Impact Bonds supported by Sitra ¹¹

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



Finland's ecosystem is multi-actor and often framed through the social economy and impact domains:

- Centre of Expertise for Social Enterprises ¹⁰
- Sitra (impact investing and experimentation) ¹¹
- STEA and civil society organisations ⁵
- Universities and incubators (e.g. Helsinki Incubators) ¹²

Support Initiatives



- TREMOR incubator programme (Helsinki Incubators) supports impact-oriented teams ¹²
- Advisory services and events from the Centre of Expertise ¹⁰

Collaboration



The development of the social economy strategy (TEM090:00/2024) included structured stakeholder engagement through working groups and roundtables, including a focus on social innovation. ¹³

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



- STEA grants (€373.6 million in 2023) ⁵
- Social Impact Bonds (outcomes-based financing model) ¹¹
- €110 million circular economy investment via Business Finland under the Sustainable Growth Programme ¹⁴

Financing Inclusivity



- Strong policy focus on labour market inclusion (e.g. people with partial work ability) ^{9 10}
- STEA funding supports preventive and inclusion-oriented initiatives ⁵

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of Social Innovation



While no dedicated awareness metric exists, the concept is increasingly embedded in national strategies and policy discourse. ^{2 13}

Research



The national strategy identifies limited research and prioritises strengthening research capacity, data, and impact measurement. ²

Education



- Aalto University offers a Social Innovation course (6 ECTS) ¹⁵
- TREMOR provides practical, incubator-based learning pathways ¹²

Entrepreneurship



EIU Business Environment Ranking



Innovation Capacity

Finland ranks 7th in the Global Innovation Index 2025, reflecting a strong innovation ecosystem that indirectly supports social innovation.¹⁶

Global Innovation Index 2025



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

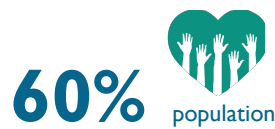
Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity



Political participation



Volunteering

Statistics Finland reports declining formal volunteering but continued high informal support (60% of people helped another household in the previous four weeks, 2021).¹⁷



Sustainability