

Enabling Social Innovation in Georgia



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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 Georgia'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

While no standalone official definition of "social innovation" was identified in public national legislation, Georgia's legal framework for innovation recognises social value within the concept of innovation.

- The Law of Georgia "On Innovations" defines innovation as an improved idea, product, service, process, or model that creates economic, scientific, or social value and can be introduced in practice. ²

Government Body for Social Innovation

While there is no dedicated government body, responsibilities are distributed across innovation and social-policy institutions.

- Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) supports innovation ecosystem development and entrepreneurship. ³
- The Research and Innovation Council (est. 2015) coordinates national research and innovation policy. ⁴
- Social enterprise development is referenced in the 2015 action plan under the Ministry of Justice and its Crime Prevention Center. ⁵

Government Strategy for Social Innovation

While no standalone national strategy exists, relevant elements appear within broader innovation governance and EU-association implementation.

- The Research and Innovation Council decree links to national innovation coordination and initiatives such as "Innovative Georgia 2020." ⁴
- The EU Association Agreement implementation plan includes "social enterprise creation and development." ⁵

Policies, Laws & Regulations

Georgia's enabling environment relies on general innovation law and related frameworks.

- Law of Georgia "On Innovations." ²
- Government Decree No. 32 (2015) establishing the Research and Innovation Council. ⁴
- GITA statutory framework. ³
- Draft "On Social Entrepreneurship" legislation under parliamentary discussion (not yet enacted). ^{6, 7}
- Law on Agricultural Cooperatives (adjacent social economy legal form).

Official Statistics



While no official statistics specifically on social innovation were identified, data exists on related sectors.

- GeoStat publishes Business Register data by legal status, including cooperatives and non-commercial entities. ⁸
- Statistics on non-profit institutions include turnover, production value, and employment indicators. ^{9 10}

Government Programs



Public programs support innovation broadly, with some relevance to social innovation.

- The 2015 action plan includes “social enterprise creation and development.” ⁵
- GITA startup matching grants (up to GEL 150,000). ¹¹
- World Bank GENIE project (USD 40 million commitment). ¹²
- Continued investment in innovation infrastructure and grant mechanisms. ¹³

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



The ecosystem includes international organisations, local support actors, and impact finance actors.

- UNDP Accelerator Lab (innovation experimentation). ¹⁴
- UNICEF UPSHIFT (youth social innovation). ¹⁵
- Business and Technology University (programme partner). ¹⁵
- Impact Hub Tbilisi (Social Impact Award). ¹⁶
- CSRDG (social entrepreneurship programming). ¹⁷
- Actio Impact Fund (impact finance + technical assistance). ¹⁸

Support Initiatives



Structured initiatives support skills development and early-stage innovation.

- UNICEF UPSHIFT (youth-focused social innovation programme across cities). ¹⁵
- Social Impact Award (student pathway to social enterprise). ¹⁶
- CSRDG social entrepreneurship programme. ¹⁷

Collaboration



Collaboration occurs mainly through donor-supported initiatives and competitions.

- Actio and CSRDG collaboration on impact investing and thematic priorities. ¹⁹
- Social Impact Award provides recurring collaboration and competition structures. ¹⁶

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Financing combines public support, development finance, and emerging impact investment.

- GITA startup grants (up to GEL 150,000). ¹¹
- World Bank GENIE project (USD 40 million). ¹²
- Actio impact finance (grants, loans, technical assistance). ¹⁸
- CSRDG reports GEL 1.2 million in investment linked to Actio. ¹⁹



Financing Inclusivity

Several programmes explicitly target inclusion.

- UNICEF UPSHIFT targets youth (14–18).¹⁵
- CSRDG focuses on vulnerable groups.¹⁷
- Actio supports work integration and inclusion.¹⁸
- Government planning links social enterprise to reintegration contexts.⁵

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public awareness is growing through policy discussion and international programmes.

- Parliamentary discussions on social entrepreneurship legislation.^{6,7}
- UNICEF promotes social innovation in youth discourse.¹⁵



Research

Research is mainly reflected through international benchmarking and development analysis.

- Global Innovation Index ranking (56/139).²⁰
- World Bank ecosystem analysis (GENIE).¹³



Education & Human Capital

Education pathways exist mainly through programmes rather than formal degrees.

- UNICEF UPSHIFT (youth training).¹⁵
- Social Impact Award (student-focused learning).¹⁶



Entrepreneurship

Georgia shows strong general entrepreneurship performance.



Business Environment

B-READY ranking highlights strong business environment.²¹

EIU Business Environment Ranking



Innovation Capacity

Global Innovation Index



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

GEM data is outdated (latest available: 2014).²² (corrected reference alignment)



Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

Climate targets (INDC/NDC commitments).^{24,25}



Political participation

Voter turnout tracked by IDEA (no value extracted).²⁷



Volunteering

(no Georgia-specific values extracted).²⁶

CAF World Giving Index 2024



Sustainability

Environmental Performance Index²³