

# Enabling Social Innovation in Tajikistan

## Country Snapshot

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

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Tajikistan'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 🔗



Tajikistan's 2025 Law "On Social Entrepreneurship" provides an explicit definition of "social innovations" as new ideas, strategies, and technologies aimed at solving social problems.<sup>2</sup> The law also embeds related concepts such as social entrepreneurship and social projects, establishing a formal policy basis for socially oriented innovation activities.<sup>2</sup>

### Government Body for Social Innovation ✓



While no dedicated social innovation authority exists, responsibility for innovation policy is institutionally anchored in the Agency of Innovation and Digital Technologies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.<sup>3</sup>

The 2025 law assigns a coordinating role to the Government of Tajikistan, including the designation of an authorized body and oversight of strategic planning in this domain.<sup>2</sup>

It also establishes a registry of social entrepreneurship entities, maintained through the state registration system (tax authorities).<sup>2 1</sup>

The Agency on Statistics under the President plays a central role in collecting and publishing official socio-economic data.<sup>4</sup>

### Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓



While no standalone national strategy for social innovation has been identified, relevant priorities are embedded within broader development frameworks.

- The Medium-term Development Program (2021–2025) includes measures to introduce entrepreneurship education, explicitly including social entrepreneurship, within vocational training systems.<sup>11</sup>
- Additionally, the State Program for Women's Entrepreneurship Development to 2027 provides a targeted policy framework supporting inclusive entrepreneurship and participation of women in economic activity.<sup>23</sup>

## Policies, Laws & Regulations

The policy environment is anchored by the Law “On Social Entrepreneurship” (2025), which defines social innovation and establishes state support mechanisms including grants, advisory services, and capacity-building measures.<sup>2</sup>



Complementary frameworks include:

- The Law “On State Social Order”, which enables government contracting of social services and projects through competitive mechanisms.<sup>5</sup>
- The Law “On Public Procurement” (2023), which governs access to public markets.<sup>6</sup>
- Supporting legal infrastructure includes laws on public associations, charitable activity, and cooperatives, which provide organizational forms for civil society and social economy actors.<sup>8 9 10</sup>

## Official Statistics



Tajikistan has institutional capacity for data collection, but measurement of social innovation remains limited. The 2025 law introduces a formal registry of social entrepreneurship entities, linked to state registration systems.<sup>2</sup> However, no dedicated official statistical series specifically tracking social innovation or social enterprises was identified in available sources.<sup>4</sup>

## Government Programs

Government support is primarily implemented through legislative mechanisms and targeted programs.



- The 2025 Law “On Social Entrepreneurship” outlines support tools including training, advisory services, grants, and financial support through state funds.<sup>2</sup>
- The State Social Order framework provides a structured channel for financing and delivering social projects through government contracts.<sup>5</sup>
- The State Program for Women’s Entrepreneurship Development to 2027 further strengthens targeted support for women entrepreneurs.<sup>23</sup>

# ECOSYSTEM

## Stakeholders

The ecosystem is shaped by a combination of public institutions, international development partners, and emerging innovation platforms. Key actors include:



- **UNICEF**, supporting youth innovation through Adolescent Innovation Labs and the UPSHIFT social entrepreneurship curriculum.<sup>12</sup>
- **UNDP**, promoting innovation and digital skills, including AI-focused training initiatives.<sup>14</sup>
- **JICA**, which supported the establishment of the Dushanbe Business Incubator.<sup>15</sup>
- **IT Park Dushanbe**, providing support services for startups and technology projects.<sup>16</sup>
- **State Business Incubator of Tajikistan**, offering incubation and business development services.<sup>17</sup>

## Support Initiatives

Support initiatives are primarily focused on youth, skills development, and entrepreneurship.



- UNICEF’s UPSHIFT program delivers structured social entrepreneurship training through Innovation Labs, enabling young people to develop solutions to community challenges.<sup>12 13</sup>
- UNDP initiatives provide additional innovation pathways, including AI learning programs for youth.<sup>14</sup>
- Business incubation infrastructure, including the Dushanbe Business Incubator, contributes to broader entrepreneurial ecosystem development.<sup>15</sup>

## Collaboration

Collaboration occurs mainly through multi-stakeholder and donor-supported initiatives.



- UNICEF programs demonstrate partnerships with the education sector to support youth-led innovation.<sup>13 24</sup>
- International cooperation, including JICA-supported initiatives, contributes to ecosystem development and capacity-building.<sup>15</sup>

# FINANCE

## Financing Schemes

Financing for social innovation is primarily embedded within broader public support mechanisms rather than dedicated instruments.

- The 2025 law предусматривает state grants and financial support through targeted funds.<sup>2</sup>
- The State Social Order framework enables financing of social projects through public contracts.<sup>5</sup>
- Public procurement provides an additional, indirect channel for revenue generation for socially oriented entities.<sup>6</sup>
- At this stage, publicly available information on the scale of dedicated social innovation funding remains limited.<sup>2</sup>

## Financing Inclusivity

Policy frameworks demonstrate a clear orientation toward inclusivity.

- The social entrepreneurship law explicitly targets socially vulnerable groups.<sup>2</sup>
- The State Program for Women's Entrepreneurship Development supports gender inclusion.<sup>23</sup>
- UNICEF initiatives emphasize participation of marginalized youth, including girls.<sup>12 13</sup>

# SOCIETY

## Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public awareness is gradually emerging through formal recognition and programmatic activities.

- The inclusion of "social innovations" in national legislation contributes to conceptual visibility.<sup>2</sup>
- Youth-focused programs led by international organizations further promote awareness among younger populations.<sup>12 13</sup>

## Research

The research landscape is still emerging and largely practice-oriented.

- Existing evidence points to applied innovation initiatives, such as UNDP-supported AI programs linked to entrepreneurship and skills development.<sup>14</sup>
- A comprehensive national research ecosystem dedicated specifically to social innovation was not identified.

## Education & Human Capital

Education and skills development for innovation are supported through both policy and programmatic initiatives.

- The Medium-term Development Program integrates social entrepreneurship into vocational education.<sup>11</sup>
- UNICEF's UPSHIFT curriculum provides hands-on learning in social innovation.<sup>12</sup>
- UNDP initiatives further expand access to digital and innovation-related skills.<sup>14</sup>

## Entrepreneurship



### Business Environment

World Bank B-READY indicators show variation across areas, with relatively stronger performance in financial services and weaker performance in business insolvency.<sup>19</sup>



### Innovation Capacity

Tajikistan ranks 108th out of 139 economies in the Global Innovation Index 2025.<sup>18</sup>

Global Innovation Index 2024



### Social entrepreneurship prevalence

Country-specific data on social entrepreneurship prevalence (e.g. GEM) was not identified.<sup>22</sup>

## Social & Environmental Consciousness



**Solidarity**



**Political participation**



population

**Volunteering**

Tajikistan ranks 62nd in the CAF World Giving Index 2024, with a score of 42. <sup>21</sup>

CAF World Giving Index 2024

**167<sup>th</sup>**



**/ 180** countries

**Sustainability**

In the Environmental Performance Index 2024, the country ranks 167th with a score of 32.3. <sup>20</sup>

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024

