

Enabling Social Innovation in Greenland

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 Greenland'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 a standalone, formally adopted definition of 'social innovation' is not explicitly articulated in the publicly available policy sources of Greenland, related concepts are embedded within existing policy and institutional frameworks. The closest formal reference is the legal category of registered social economy enterprises, which outlines general parameters concerning social purpose and the reinvestment of profits. ²

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓



Greenland's enabling framework is shaped through institutions responsible for social economy enterprise registration, enterprise support, and research innovation linkages:

- The **2019 Act on registered social economy enterprises** assigns registration and oversight functions under Naalakkersuisut (Government of Greenland). ²
- The government service portal **Sullissivik** provides a central entry point to apply for business advice and financing under enterprise promotion schemes.
- Arctic Hub connects research, education, innovation, business and society, strengthening research-to-application linkages. ⁶

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓



While there is no standalone national strategy for social innovation identified, relevant elements appear in broader strategies focused on sustainable development, entrepreneurship and innovation:

- The **Self-Sufficiency Strategy (2024)** emphasises infrastructure, labour, innovation and entrepreneurship support environments. ³
- The **Tourism Strategy 2025–2035** frames responsible growth, local value creation and community benefit. ⁷

These strategies indirectly support conditions for mission-driven and community-based enterprise.

Policies, Laws & Regulations

Greenland has a strong legal anchor for social-purpose enterprise models, alongside broader enterprise-promotion frameworks:

- **Registered social economy enterprises (2019):** The 2019 act sets criteria for registration, including a stated social purpose, independence from the public sector, and defined handling of profits including reinvestment and limited distribution. ²
- **Enterprise promotion (land-based industries):** A consolidated legal instrument underpins business support measures and related scheme administration. ²⁰
- **Kingdom of Denmark:** Denmark's registered social economy enterprise act explicitly does not apply to Greenland, confirming Greenland's distinct legislative approach. ²¹

Official Statistics

While dedicated official statistical series specifically for “social innovation” were not identified in the sources reviewed, several adjacent official data sources support ecosystem mapping:

- The 2019 act establishes an official register of registered social economy enterprises, with registration and reporting requirements. ²
- Statistics Greenland publishes economic and business statistics relevant to enabling conditions. ⁸
- Official statistical documentation references inclusion of co-operative companies (“andelselskaber”). ²
- National accounts documentation references **NPISH** (non-profit institutions serving households), including cultural, religious and social associations. ¹⁰

Government Programs

Public programmes supporting entrepreneurship and innovation can provide practical pathways for social entrepreneurs and mission-driven enterprises:

- A government subsidy analysis describes enterprise promotion schemes administered via Nalik Ventures, with indicative funding of **DKK 9 million** annually since 2019. ⁴
- Instruments include advisory services, product development support, microloans, loans and investment. ⁴
- Product development support parameters referenced include financing up to 50% of documented expenses and a maximum **DKK 300,000** per project. ⁴
- The application pathway for business advice/financing is consolidated via Sullissivik. ⁵

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders

The ecosystem includes public-sector enablers, enterprise-support intermediaries, research platforms and civil society:

- Nalik Ventures is referenced as an administrator of enterprise promotion schemes and support instruments in government analysis. ⁴
- Arctic Hub is positioned as a bridging platform across research, innovation, education, business and society. ⁶
- A national volunteering report reflects civic engagement like Paarisa, and work to strengthen conditions for volunteer social action in communities. ¹⁷

Support Initiatives

Support appears strongest through business support instruments and research innovation infrastructure, rather than explicitly branded “social innovation” programmes:

- Enterprise support includes advisory services and financing instruments including microloans and product development support. ⁴
- Arctic Hub is designed to strengthen connections between research-based knowledge and societal/business opportunities. ⁶
- Volunteer-sector strengthening efforts support local capacity and community-level action. ¹⁷

Collaboration



Collaboration pathways are visible through cross-sector platforms and strategy processes:

- The Self-Sufficiency Strategy frames a policy intention to strengthen entrepreneurship-support environments.³
- Arctic Hub is explicitly designed as a linking mechanism across sectors.⁶
- Tourism strategy planning frames growth in social and community value terms, supporting local partnerships in sustainable development.⁷

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Financing appears largely embedded in general enterprise promotion and public-sector partnership funding streams:

- Enterprise promotion schemes are described as receiving approximately **DKK 9 million** annually since 2019.⁴
- Product development support terms referenced include up to 50% co-financing and a maximum **DKK 300,000** per project.⁴
- **€225 million (2021–2027)** allocated to Greenland under the EU multiannual programme (not social innovation-specific but relevant to enabling conditions).¹²

Financing Inclusivity



Public evidence was not identified in the reviewed sources on dedicated funding windows specifically targeting women, youth or other groups within Greenland's enterprise promotion schemes. Relevant strategy framing nevertheless highlights strengthening entrepreneurship-support environments across communities.³

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of Social Innovation



Public discourse is visible through adjacent legal and policy frames and civic engagement:

- Legal recognition of social economy enterprises demonstrates institutional acknowledgment of social-purpose business.²
- A national volunteering survey reflects active community engagement and policy interest in improving volunteer conditions.¹⁷

Research



Research plays a central role in Greenland's development ecosystem:

- Arctic Hub is positioned as a concrete structure for connecting research and innovation to societal and business opportunities.⁶
- Greenland-relevant climate monitoring is supported by institutions including NOAA's Arctic Report Card and the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland.^{18 19}

Education



While social innovation-specific degree programmes were not identified in the sources reviewed, the Self-Sufficiency Strategy emphasises skills, labour and training as development priorities that can indirectly support social entrepreneurship capacity.³

Entrepreneurship

International entrepreneurship and innovation benchmarking often covers Greenland indirectly through the Kingdom of Denmark:



Business Environment

The World Bank's "Business Ready (B-READY)" is the current global framework for regulatory/business environment assessment, following the discontinuation of Doing Business (Greenland-specific benchmarking was not identified in the reviewed sources).¹⁵



Innovation Capacity

The Global Innovation Index ranks Denmark 9th in 2025 (Greenland is not separately ranked in the index; Denmark provides contextual benchmarking).¹³

Global Innovation Index 2025



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

The Denmark profile on Global Entrepreneurship Monitor indicates the most recent data displayed is from 2014, highlighting gaps in consistently updated, comparable indicators for Greenland itself.¹⁴

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2024

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Several indicators and evidence sources suggest an enabling foundation through civic participation, volunteerism and environmental monitoring:



Solidarity

Statistics Greenland's StatBank includes greenhouse gas emissions tables supporting climate-related measurement capacity.¹¹



Political participation

A European Parliament briefing reports voter turnout of 71% in Greenland's 2025 parliamentary election.¹²



Volunteering

A volunteering study supports visibility of community solidarity and social action.¹⁷



Sustainability

As a proxy benchmark, Denmark is ranked 10th in the Environmental Performance Index 2024; Greenland is not separately listed.¹⁶

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024