

# Enabling Social Innovation in Kyrgyzstan

## 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 Kyrgyzstan'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 Kyrgyzstan does not have a formal legal definition of social innovation, related concepts are embedded in legislation and policy frameworks. The Law "On State Social Order" defines social entrepreneurship as "entrepreneurial activity in socially useful purposes," positioning it as a public-benefit activity linked to service delivery and community development. <sup>2</sup>

This indicates a functional understanding of socially oriented innovation, even if the broader concept of "social innovation" is not formally codified.

### Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

Rather than a single coordinating authority, responsibilities relevant to social innovation are distributed across multiple ministries and public bodies:

- **The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration:** plays a central role in social service delivery and implementation of State Social Order mechanisms. <sup>3</sup>
- **The Ministry of Economy and Commerce:** oversees entrepreneurship policy and green economy development, shaping the broader enabling environment for mission-driven enterprises. <sup>4</sup>
- **The State Social Order framework:** allows multiple "authorized state bodies" to act as commissioning entities for socially beneficial services. <sup>2</sup>

### Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

While no standalone national strategy explicitly targets social innovation, related elements are integrated into broader development and digital agendas.

- **The National Development Programme (to 2026):** incorporates a "social contract" approach aimed at poverty reduction and livelihood generation. <sup>5</sup>
- **The "Digital Kyrgyzstan" programme (2019–2023):** supports digital transformation, enabling new forms of civic participation and service delivery often associated with social innovation. <sup>6</sup>

These frameworks indirectly support innovation in public services and community-based solutions.

## Policies, Laws & Regulations

Kyrgyzstan has several legal and regulatory instruments that enable socially beneficial activities and partnerships between government and non-state actors:

- **State Social Order Law (2017)**: establishes mechanisms for financing social services and projects through contracts, grants, and vouchers. <sup>1</sup>
- **Cabinet Decree No. 604 (2022)**: defines procedures for competitive project selection and service delivery. <sup>7</sup>
- **Social contract regulations (2022, amended 2023/2025)**: support income generation among low-income households. <sup>5</sup>
- **Public procurement law**: shapes access for service providers and enterprises. <sup>8</sup>
- **Civil society amendments (2024)**: introduce updated definitions and regulatory requirements for non-commercial organizations. <sup>2</sup>

Together, these frameworks provide a legal basis for outsourcing and co-producing social services, although not explicitly framed as social innovation policy.

## Official Statistics

Kyrgyzstan maintains a relatively developed official statistics system, though social innovation is not tracked as a distinct category.

- **The National Statistical Committee**: operates an Open Data portal with datasets relevant to employment, cooperatives, and civil society. <sup>11</sup>
- **Financial reporting forms**: exist for non-commercial organizations (e.g., Form №4-fin). <sup>13</sup>

While useful proxies exist, the absence of dedicated social innovation metrics limits ecosystem visibility and monitoring.

## Government Programs

Government programmes focus primarily on poverty reduction and social service delivery, creating indirect enabling conditions for social innovation:

- **State Social Order**: provides competitive grants to NCOs for socially beneficial projects (~115.6 million KGS reported). <sup>14</sup>
- **Social contract programme**: provides non-repayable support (100,000–150,000 KGS) to low-income households to support income generation and entrepreneurship. <sup>15 16</sup>

These programmes demonstrate increasing use of outcome-oriented and participatory approaches.

# ECOSYSTEM

## Stakeholders

Kyrgyzstan's ecosystem includes a mix of international organisations, academic institutions, and development actors:

- **UNDP Accelerator Lab**: supports experimentation, grassroots solution mapping, and innovation portfolios. <sup>17</sup>
- **Aga Khan Foundation**: promotes community development and enterprise support. <sup>18</sup>
- **American University of Central Asia (AUCA)**: offers a Social Entrepreneurship and Design Thinking programme. <sup>19</sup>
- **University of Central Asia (UCA)**: conducts applied research through IPPA. <sup>20</sup>
- **INTRAC**: provides international research and ecosystem analysis. <sup>21</sup>

## Support Initiatives

Support mechanisms focus on capacity-building, experimentation, and education:

- UNDP Accelerator Lab initiatives include hackathons, digital engagement tools, and innovation portfolios. <sup>17</sup>
- UCA and AUCA provide entrepreneurship training and interdisciplinary programmes combining innovation and social impact. <sup>19 22</sup>

## Collaboration



Collaboration occurs primarily through government contracting mechanisms and international partnerships:

- **State Social Order:** enables participatory, competitive selection of projects involving civil society. [2](#) [7](#)
- **UNDP initiatives:** promote public–private collaboration and knowledge exchange within global innovation networks. [17](#)

# FINANCE

## Financing Schemes



Financing for socially oriented activities is a combination of public funding, development finance, and philanthropy:

- **Public funding:** State Social Order grants (~115.6 million KGS) [14](#) and Social contract programme (3.1–3.3 billion KGS, 2022–2024). [15](#) [16](#)
- **Philanthropy:** Closure of Soros Foundation–Kyrgyzstan in 2024 represents a shift in the funding landscape. [23](#) [24](#)
- **Development finance:** World Bank support contributes to programme scaling. [16](#)

## Financing Inclusivity



Financing mechanisms demonstrate a strong focus on inclusion:

- Social contract programmes target low-income households, particularly in rural areas.
- High participation rates among women beneficiaries.
- Legal frameworks explicitly include vulnerable populations and public-benefit sectors. [2](#) [7](#)

# SOCIETY

## Public Awareness of Social Innovation



The explicit concept of “social innovation” has limited visibility in public discourse; however, related ideas are widely present:

- Policy language emphasizes social entrepreneurship, community problem-solving, and service provision. [2](#) [7](#)
- UNICEF reporting highlights charitable giving and civic engagement trends. [25](#)

## Research



Research activity is present but relatively modest:

- UCA IPPA and INTRAC provide research on social enterprises and ecosystem dynamics. [20](#) [21](#)
- International legal analysis (e.g., Venice Commission) contributes to understanding regulatory context. [10](#)

## Education & Human Capital



Education pathways for social innovation are emerging:

- AUCA offers a dedicated interdisciplinary programme combining social entrepreneurship and design thinking. [19](#)
- UCA provides entrepreneurship training and continuing education programmes. [22](#)

## Entrepreneurship



### Business Environment

World Bank B-READY scores indicate moderate business environment performance. <sup>27 28 29</sup>



### Innovation Capacity

Global Innovation Index 2025



### Social entrepreneurship prevalence

No GEM data available for social entrepreneurship prevalence. <sup>30</sup>

## Social & Environmental Consciousness



### Solidarity

ND-GAIN Index: rank 61. <sup>33</sup>



### Political participation

Voter turnout: 36.9% (2025 elections). <sup>31</sup>



### Volunteering

World Giving Index <sup>25</sup>



### Sustainability

Environmental Performance Index <sup>32</sup>