

Enabling Social Innovation in Kosovo

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 Kosovo'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



A standalone, formally adopted definition of 'social innovation' is not explicitly articulated in the publicly available policy sources. The closest policy proxy is the legal definition of a "social enterprise": a legal person with social objectives that conducts economic activity in the general interest and integrates vulnerable groups into employment. ²

Government Body for Social Innovation



While no dedicated government body for social innovation was identified, the social enterprise status framework provides an institutional anchor:

- Regulation (GRK) No. 19/2020 establishes **commissions to assess social enterprise status** and handle appeals. ⁴
- Regulation (GRK) No. 17/2020 sets procedures for registration and a **ministry-maintained social enterprise register**. ³

Government Strategy for Social Innovation



While there is no standalone national strategy for social innovation, relevant elements appear in wider strategies and plans:

- **National Development Strategy and Plan 2030**; focuses on fostering sustainable, green economic growth, improving competitiveness, and accelerating European integration ²
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy 2019–2023**; approved with an action plan via Government decision (94th meeting, 19 March 2019). ^{10 11}
- **Employment Strategy 2024–2028**. ¹³
- **Civil Society Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023** (and implementation reporting). ^{7 8}
- **Digital strategies (e-Government 2023–2027; Digital Agenda 2013–2020)**. ^{18 20}
- **Climate Change Strategy 2019–2028 and Action Plan**. ¹⁹
- **Industrial Development and Business Support Strategy 2030**. ¹²

Policies, Laws & Regulations

Kosovo's enabling environment for social innovation is shaped by several adjacent legal and regulatory instruments:

- **Social enterprise framework:** Law No. 06/L-022 on Social Enterprises (2018) establishes the legal basis for social enterprise status.² Regulation (GRK) No. 17/2020 sets procedures for registration and a social enterprise register.³ Regulation (GRK) No. 19/2020 sets procedures for obtaining/refusing/losing status and commission arrangements.⁴
- **Civil society framework:** Law No. 06/L-043 on Freedom of Association in NGOs (2019, amended 2024) provides the legal framework for NGOs.⁵ Regulation MF No. 04/2017 sets criteria, standards, and procedures for public funding of NGOs.⁶
- **Innovation/regulatory environment:** A Draft Law on **Innovation and Entrepreneurship** has been publicly consulted, signalling continued legal development for innovation and entrepreneurship support.¹⁶ The **Better Regulation Strategy 2.0 (2017–2021)** provides an official framework for improving regulatory quality.¹⁷

Official Statistics

Public evidence points to several formal registers and administrative data sources relevant to social innovation-adjacent activity:

- **Social enterprises:** Legislation and regulations foresee an official register of social enterprises, maintained and published by the responsible ministry; however, a publicly accessible and populated register was not identified in the sources reviewed.^{2 3}
- **NGOs:** The NGO law provides the formal basis for registration and governance of NGOs (including references to implementing acts).⁵
- **Business forms:** Kosovo's business registration system includes multiple legal forms (including agricultural co-operatives), indicating structured administrative registries relevant to the broader social economy landscape.²²

Government Programs

Government planning documents and strategies indicate several mechanisms supporting inclusive entrepreneurship and social-economy-adjacent activity:

- **Economic Reform Programme (ERP) 2020–2022;** includes measures referencing subsidies and grants for registered social enterprises to employ vulnerable groups, and support to licensed NGOs providing social services.¹⁴
- **Innovation and entrepreneurship policy programming:** The National Strategy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2019–2023 references public allocations since 2018; over €10 million for innovation-related subsidies/transfers and innovation and entrepreneurship centres.¹⁰
- **Employment Strategy 2024–2028:** Sets an implementation resource envelope of approximately 90,234,248 and identifies disadvantaged groups to be prioritised in labour market measures and improved data systems.¹³
- **Civil society cooperation:** the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society aims to strengthen participation and mechanisms for cooperation, with annual implementation reporting.^{7 8}

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders

Kosovo's social innovation ecosystem overlaps strongly with the entrepreneurship, civil society, and tech ecosystems. Stakeholders referenced in reputable institutional sources include:

- **Support and ecosystem organisations:** Innovation Centre Kosovo, Kosovo Business Angels Network, STIKK, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce. ¹⁵
- **Public enterprise and business support infrastructure:** National employment policy references public enterprise support services, including the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency. ¹³
- **Formal registries enabling business formation:** The Kosovo Business Registration Agency supports business registration across legal forms, relevant for start-up and social enterprise pathways. ²²

Support Initiatives

While a dedicated, nationally branded “social innovation” support pipeline was not identified, multiple initiatives and infrastructures support innovation and mission-driven entrepreneurship:

- The **National Strategy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2019–2023** frames ecosystem development through policy measures, support instruments for start-ups, and innovation/entrepreneurship centres. ¹⁰
- The **e-Government Strategy 2023–2027** supports public sector digitalisation, strengthening a digital enabling environment that can facilitate civic-tech and service innovation. ¹⁸
- The **Digital Agenda 2013–2020** provides earlier policy framing for ICT sector development and digital adoption. ²⁰

Collaboration

Collaboration appears most visible in government–civil society cooperation and in entrepreneurship ecosystem networking:

- The **Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2019–2023** provides an explicit framework for structured cooperation, participation, and enabling conditions for CSOs. ⁷
- Government reporting on implementation (e.g., 2022) reinforces the strategy as an active coordination instrument. ⁸
- Institutional ecosystem analysis points to **engagement among innovation organisations, networks, and business actors** through events and collaborations in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. ¹⁵

FINANCE

Financing Schemes

Financing for social innovation-adjacent activity is reflected mainly through public subsidies/grants, NGO public funding rules, and innovation policy allocations:

- The ERP 2020–2022 includes planned subsidies and grants for registered social enterprises (with indicative beneficiary numbers) and references support for licensed NGOs providing social services. ¹⁴
- The National Strategy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2019–2023 references public funding allocations since 2018 to support innovation activity (including subsidies/transfers and investment in innovation/entrepreneurship centres). ¹⁰
- Regulation MF No. 04/2017 sets an official framework for public funding of NGOs, helping standardise state support to civil society delivery models. ⁶

Financing Inclusivity

Inclusivity is embedded in several policy and legal frameworks relevant to social innovation:

- The social enterprise definition links status to **integration of vulnerable groups** into employment, positioning inclusion as a core feature of the model.²
- The ERP identifies **employment-focused support** for vulnerable groups through social enterprises as part of planned measures.¹⁴
- The innovation and entrepreneurship strategy includes a thematic focus on supporting innovation and entrepreneurship among **youth and women in business**.¹⁰
- The Employment Strategy 2024–2028 explicitly prioritises **disadvantaged groups** (including youth, women, long-term unemployed, social welfare beneficiaries, low-skilled individuals, persons with disabilities, and ethnic communities).¹³

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Kosovo's policy environment includes several entry points supporting social innovation in practice particularly through social enterprise legislation and frameworks to strengthen civil society participation.^{2 7}

Research

The innovation and entrepreneurship strategy highlights the role of knowledge, universities, and research linkages in building an innovation ecosystem.¹⁰ While this provides a supportive context, public evidence of dedicated national “social innovation” research centres or a distinct research agenda was not identified in the reviewed sources.

Education & Human Capital

Kosovo's official digital strategies support enabling conditions relevant to innovation capabilities:

- The e-Government Strategy 2023–2027 and the earlier Digital Agenda 2013–2020 provide policy framing for digital transformation and ICT development.^{18 20}
- Public evidence was not identified in the reviewed sources for nationally standardised education programmes explicitly labelled “social innovation” (e.g., accredited degrees or national curricula dedicated to the topic).

Entrepreneurship

57^t
h / 190 countries

Business Environment

Kosovo is cited as ranking 57th out of 190 economies in 2020 (as referenced in the Employment Strategy 2024–2028).¹³

123^t
h / 133 countries

Innovation Capacity



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

GEM: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor profile for Kosovo notes most recent data as 2014 and indicates no country report available on the platform page.²¹

Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity



Political participation



Volunteering



Sustainability

Kosovo has an official climate policy framework (Climate Change Strategy 2019–2028 and Action Plan).¹⁹