

# Enabling Social Innovation in Uzbekistan

## 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 Uzbekistan'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 🔗

Public evidence of an official, government-issued definition of "social innovation" was not identified in the primary legal and strategy sources reviewed for this snapshot. <sup>2 & 2</sup>

Adjacent official terminology and policy entry points include "social partnership," state "social order" mechanisms for engaging non-state actors, and broader innovation, digital, and green transition strategies shaping the enabling context for new solutions. <sup>2, 3, 15</sup>

### Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

While there is no single, dedicated government body explicitly mandated for "social innovation," several institutions play enabling roles in supporting civil society, innovation, and social development:

- **Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan:** hosts a Department of Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organizations (NNCOs/NGOs), serving as an administrative anchor for civil society engagement. <sup>5</sup>
- **Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan:** associated with a Public Fund supporting NGOs and civil society institutions (regulation adopted in 2008). <sup>4</sup>
- **Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:** responsible for coordinating national innovation policy, commercialization, and startup ecosystem development. <sup>13</sup>
- **Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction:** contributes to social policy implementation and poverty reduction initiatives. <sup>14</sup>

### Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

While there is no standalone national strategy explicitly framed as a "social innovation strategy," relevant elements are embedded across multiple national strategies:

- **Concept of civil society development 2021–2025** (presidential decree). <sup>8</sup>
- **Strategy of innovative development 2022–2026.** <sup>9</sup>
- **"Digital Uzbekistan–2030" strategy.** <sup>10</sup>
- **Strategy for transition to a green economy 2019–2030.** <sup>11</sup>
- **Strategy of social protection of the population.** <sup>12</sup>

## Policies, Laws & Regulations

Uzbekistan's enabling environment is primarily structured through frameworks supporting public–civil society cooperation, NGO financing, and procedural governance tools:

- **Law “On social partnership” (LRU-376):** establishes a legal framework for collaboration between state and civil society actors. <sup>2</sup>
- **Budget Code provisions:** enable state support for NGOs through grants, subsidies, and “social order” mechanisms. <sup>3</sup>
- **Public Fund regulation under Oliy Majlis (2008):** defines funding channels for socially significant programs. <sup>4</sup>
- **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 527 (2023):** introduces procedural and transparency mechanisms for NGO-led projects. <sup>4</sup>
- **Policy reform (PF-5430, 2018):** signals strengthening of civil society participation in governance. <sup>7</sup>

## Official Statistics

The national statistics system includes reporting requirements for non-profit organizations (“I-notijorat,” annual). <sup>16</sup>

National accounts incorporate NPISH (non-profit institutions serving households), providing macro-level visibility of the nonprofit sector. <sup>17</sup>

No official statistics explicitly labeled for “social innovation,” “social enterprises,” or the social and solidarity economy were identified. <sup>16 17</sup>

## Government Programs

Government-supported mechanisms relevant to social innovation include:

- **“Social order” mechanism:** enables NGOs to identify local challenges, propose solutions, and support public oversight, supported by budget allocations (e.g., 60 billion soums referenced in a Presidential Address). <sup>15</sup>
- **Public Fund under Oliy Majlis:** finances socially significant programs through state and other lawful sources. <sup>4</sup>
- **Competitive grant funding:** examples include project ceilings up to approximately 180–200 million so‘m per call. <sup>18 19</sup>
- **World Bank-supported INSON Project (\$100 million):** aims to improve access to social services for vulnerable populations. <sup>20</sup>

# ECOSYSTEM

## Stakeholders

The ecosystem includes a mix of government-linked innovation actors and internationally supported initiatives:

- **UNDP Uzbekistan Accelerator Lab (established 2019):** supports experimentation and innovation for sustainable development. <sup>21</sup>
- **IT Park Uzbekistan:** provides incubation and acceleration services for startups. <sup>22</sup>
- **IT Park international accelerator programs (e.g., Global Startup Accelerator 2026).** <sup>23</sup>
- **e-NGO portal:** enhances transparency and visibility of civil society organizations. <sup>24</sup>

## Support Initiatives

Support initiatives are primarily embedded within broader innovation and development ecosystems:

- UNDP Accelerator Lab methodologies focused on experimentation and learning. <sup>21</sup>
- IT Park incubation and accelerator programs supporting startup development. <sup>22 23</sup>

## Collaboration

Collaboration is structured through national development processes and formal policy mechanisms:

- Voluntary National Review (2020): highlights participation of civil society in SDG processes. <sup>25</sup>
- “Social order” mechanism: enables NGO participation across sectors such as education, health, and employment. <sup>15</sup>
- Cabinet Resolution No. 527: supports structured cooperation and transparency via digital platforms. <sup>4</sup>

# FINANCE

## Financing Schemes

Financing mechanisms relevant to social innovation include:

- Budget Code provisions enabling grants, subsidies, and social order mechanisms. <sup>3</sup>
- Public Fund financing for socially significant projects. <sup>4</sup>
- Budget allocations through “social order.” <sup>15</sup>
- Competitive grant programs with defined ceilings. <sup>18 19</sup>
- World Bank financing (INSON Project). <sup>20</sup>

## Financing Inclusivity

- Targeted support for women’s entrepreneurship (additional budget allocations exceeding 1 trillion soums). <sup>15</sup>
- INSON Project focuses on vulnerable populations. <sup>20</sup>
- Regional grant calls support geographic inclusivity. <sup>19</sup>

# SOCIETY

## Public Awareness of Social Innovation

While “social innovation” is not widely used as a formal policy term, related concepts such as innovation for development and social partnership are prominent. <sup>2 15 21</sup>  
National SDG processes reflect recognition of civil society contributions. <sup>25</sup>

## Research

- UNDP Accelerator Lab contributes to applied research and experimentation. <sup>21</sup>
- No clear evidence of dedicated academic programs explicitly focused on social innovation. <sup>13</sup>

## Education & Human Capital

- Government mandates support integration of education, science, and innovation systems. <sup>13</sup>
- “Digital Uzbekistan–2030” promotes digital skills and innovation capacity. <sup>10</sup>

## Entrepreneurship



### Business Environment

World Bank B-READY indicators available, though specific scores were not identified. <sup>27</sup>



### Innovation Capacity

Global Innovation Index 2025 <sup>26</sup>



### Social entrepreneurship prevalence

No GEM data identified in the sources reviewed.

## Social & Environmental Consciousness



**Solidarity**



**Political participation**

-.-%



population

**Volunteering**

Law on Volunteering (2019) indicates formal recognition of volunteerism.<sup>29</sup>

No nationally reported volunteerism rates identified.

107<sup>th</sup>



/ 180 countries

**Sustainability**

score 42.6

Environmental Performance Index 2024<sup>28</sup>