

# Enabling Social Innovation in San Marino

## 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 San Marino'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 a standalone official definition of "social innovation" in national legislation and core strategies was not identified in this review. The enabling environment is instead shaped through adjacent, legally defined fields: associations and volunteering, social/service cooperation, and innovation policy (including support structures for innovative enterprises). <sup>2 3 4 5</sup>


### Government Body for Social Innovation

 San Marino does not publicly position a single dedicated "social innovation" authority; responsibilities appear distributed across governance for the third sector, social inclusion via cooperative forms, and innovation/economic development.

Key bodies referenced in primary sources include:

- Consulta delle Associazioni non profit: established by law; manages the national promotion fund for non-profit activities and supports coordination of registered associations (with a coordination body that formally includes state secretaries for culture and for social affairs, without voting rights). <sup>2</sup>
- San Marino Innovation S.p.A.: referenced in innovation legislation as the certifying/supervisory actor for highly innovative enterprises and for certified incubators/accelerators, and in the digital agenda framework as a key implementation/coordination actor. <sup>4 5</sup>
- Dipartimento Sviluppo Economico and the Ufficio Attività Economiche: the economic development administration and office responsible for core business, licensing, incentives and registry functions; its mandate includes maintaining economic activity registers (with a future integrated "Registro Unico"), administering incentives, and undertaking research/analysis and legislative support for economic activities. <sup>4 7</sup>

### Government Strategy for Social Innovation

 While no standalone social innovation strategy was identified, relevant elements appear in the national digital strategy framework:

- The digital agenda instrument defines the **Agenda Digitale Sammarinese (ADS)** as the national digital development plan aligned with European standards, intended to support sustainable socio-economic growth and multi-actor cooperation (public administration, enterprises, innovators, research, and services). <sup>4</sup>
- The same framework assigns implementation roles, including annual reporting on ADS progress and coordination of strategic digital development. <sup>4</sup>

## Policies, Laws & Regulations

San Marino's enabling environment for social-innovation-adjacent activity is shaped by a mix of third-sector law, cooperative inclusion measures, and innovation policy.

Key instruments include:

- **Associations and volunteering law (2016):** creates a framework for associations and volunteering, establishes a non-profit promotion fund, links eligibility for certain public support to registration, and provides tax-related incentives (including a tax deduction ceiling for participation in cultural/social activities offered by registered organisations).<sup>2</sup>
- **Social/service cooperation implementing decree (2012):** operationalises social inclusion through cooperative activity by defining “disadvantaged persons,” setting membership thresholds for social cooperatives, enabling reserved/preferential procurement, and setting out a convention framework and targeted support measures.<sup>3</sup>
- **Innovation and high-tech enterprise regime (2019):** establishes a framework for “imprese ad alto contenuto tecnologico,” including certification/monitoring roles, incentives, and an enabling environment for certified incubators/accelerators/science parks.<sup>5</sup>



## Official Statistics

Official statistics directly labelled as “social innovation” were not identified; however, official data can support proxy mapping of the social economy landscape.

- The national statistics authority Ufficio Informatica, Tecnologia, Dati e Statistica publishes firm counts by legal form, including **cooperatives** and “enti vari.” The 2025 economic-statistical report shows **62 cooperatives** recorded at September 2024 (within the business demography table by legal form).<sup>2</sup>
- This supports ecosystem sizing, even where “social enterprise” or “SSE” is not an official statistical category in the published tables reviewed.<sup>2</sup>



## Government Programs

San Marino's public support levers for social-innovation-adjacent actors include dedicated funds, structured conventions, and inclusion-linked subsidies.

- **Non-profit promotion fund:** the law establishes a “Fondo per la promozione delle attività senza scopo di lucro,” with multiple funding streams, including the “**3 per mille**” designation by personal income taxpayers and a dedicated state contribution line; the fund is managed by the Consulta.<sup>2</sup>
- **Social cooperative supports:** the implementing decree provides:
  - 50% reimbursement of documented expenses (capital grants) for start-up/workplace adaptation and training connected to insertion of disadvantaged workers;<sup>3</sup>
  - wage-related contributions for certain disability cases (up to 50% of paid remuneration, up to 12 months, capped per worker, within stated limits);<sup>3</sup>
  - potential interest-subsidy mechanisms (contingent on budgetary arrangements described in the decree).<sup>3</sup>
- **Innovation ecosystem support:** the high-tech enterprise regime links access to benefits to certification processes and recognises certified incubators/accelerators enabling co-working and enterprise growth support.<sup>5</sup>



# ECOSYSTEM

## Stakeholders

San Marino's ecosystem includes public bodies, innovation institutions, universities, and philanthropy, largely framed through third-sector and innovation policy.

- The Consulta and registered associations form a core platform for non-profit coordination and access to certain public support mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>
- Social cooperatives are formally positioned as vehicles for labour-market inclusion of disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities, including via public procurement conventions.<sup>3</sup>
- The digital agenda framework includes the Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Digitale Sammarineseas a structural support actor and positions the innovation institute as a key ecosystem coordinator.<sup>4</sup>
- Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino provides explicit education and training related to “innovazione sociale” through a postgraduate master initiative.<sup>10</sup>
- Ente Cassa di Faetano supports community-oriented initiatives and operates an excellence fund for high-level training (grant-based support).<sup>11</sup>



## Support Initiatives

Evidence points to three main channels of ecosystem support, with limited public evidence of dedicated “social innovation incubators” as such.

- **Certified incubators and accelerators (innovation policy):** the high-tech enterprise regime formalises certified incubators/accelerators/science parks offering co-working and services supporting enterprise growth.<sup>5</sup>
- **Professional formation for social innovation:** the university senate record describes the TESI master as training professionals to design and manage social innovation processes in educational, community, and institutional contexts.<sup>10</sup>
- **Administrative enabling and incentives for enterprise:** the economic activities office sets out how users access public services and incentives, including support processes framed around transparency and service standards.<sup>7 8</sup>

## Collaboration

Collaboration appears institutionalised through strategy instruments and contracting/convention mechanisms.

- The digital agenda explicitly emphasises cooperation across enterprises, innovators, public administration, and research, involving a broad set of institutions and stakeholders.<sup>4</sup>
- Social cooperative procurement conventions include defined coordination with labour and vocational training bodies and quality/vigilance provisions.<sup>3</sup>
- The associations framework institutionalises promotion and coordination through the Consulta and links registration to access pathways (including mechanisms tied to public funds and reporting).<sup>2</sup>

# FINANCE

## Financing Schemes

San Marino’s financing landscape for social-innovation-adjacent activity combines public funding streams with targeted subsidies and philanthropic grant-making.

- **Non-profit promotion fund:** established by law, financed through (among other streams) a taxpayer-designated 3 per mille contribution and state contributions, and managed by the Consulta.<sup>2</sup>
- **Social cooperative economic supports:** include 50% reimbursement of eligible documented expenses (capital grants), wage-related contributions for certain disability profiles, and potential interest-subsidy instruments.<sup>3</sup>
- **Innovation and enterprise incentives:** the economic activities office administers incentive channels and business support functions; the high-tech enterprise regime includes fiscal incentives and special investment/risk-capital forms.<sup>5 7</sup>
- **Philanthropic support for human capital:** Ente Cassa di Faetano runs a non-repayable excellence grant (“sostegno economico a fondo perduto”) for meritorious students pursuing high-level training programmes abroad and comparable paths.<sup>11</sup>

## Financing Inclusivity

Inclusivity is most explicit in the social cooperative framework and in the formal definition of target groups for labour inclusion.

- The social cooperative framework defines “persons at risk of serious social exclusion” and sets a minimum threshold for disadvantaged members in social cooperatives, alongside reserved procurement mechanisms and disability-linked wage support.<sup>3</sup>
- The associations/volunteering framework supports broad participation through institutional mechanisms and includes incentives for cultural/social participation via registered organisations.<sup>2</sup>

# SOCIETY

## Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public discourse is more explicitly institutionalised around volunteering, solidarity, and civic participation than around “social innovation” as a single policy label.

- The associations law positions volunteering and non-profit activity as socially valuable and establishes structured support (funding, coordination, registration).<sup>2</sup>
- The “social innovation” label appears directly in postgraduate education offerings, suggesting an emerging conceptual foothold in higher education.<sup>10</sup>

## Research

Evidence of formal research/training positioning around social innovation appears in higher education documentation.

- The university senate record describes the **Master di II livello TESI – Training and Education in Social Innovation** as a one-year joint master (60 CFU; 1500 hours) designed to train professionals to design and manage social innovation processes across educational, community, and institutional contexts. <sup>10</sup>

## Education & Human Capital

Education and human capital development connect to social innovation via targeted postgraduate provision and broader civic-oriented funding mechanisms.

- The TESI master explicitly references “innovazione sociale” as a core competence area and includes international teaching and territorial internships as described in the senate record. <sup>10</sup>
- The Fondo per l’Eccellenza Sammarinese provides grant-based support for high-level training and specialisation of young people, strengthening skills relevant to societal and economic development. <sup>11</sup>

## Entrepreneurship

San Marino’s entrepreneurship environment can be partially contextualised through international benchmarks and national administrative functions.



### Business Environment

In the World Bank’s Doing Business 2020 country profile, San Marino is reported with DB Rank 92 and DB Score 64.2 (legacy indicator set). <sup>14</sup>



### Innovation Capacity

In the World Intellectual Property Organization Global Innovation Index 2024, which reports 133 economy profiles, San Marino is not included among the economy profiles (no “San Marino” economy profile is listed in the publication). <sup>13</sup>

Global Innovation Index 2024



### Social entrepreneurship prevalence

Public evidence of current Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) national indicators for San Marino was not identified in this review.

## Social & Environmental Consciousness

Available indicators point to measurable political participation data, while some environmental rankings exclude San Marino.



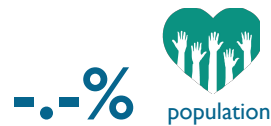
### Solidarity

The digital agenda framework aligns innovation policy with objectives of sustainable socio-economic growth, linking broader societal goals with innovation and development planning. <sup>4</sup>



### Political participation

The Inter-Parliamentary Union records a 50.7% voter turnout for the 09 June 2024 parliamentary election (19,449 voters out of 38,338 registered voters). <sup>15</sup>



### Volunteering



### Sustainability

The Yale University Environmental Performance Index technical appendix lists San Marino among countries excluded from the 2024 EPI, meaning no 2024 EPI rank is reported. <sup>16</sup>

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024