

Enabling Social Innovation in Fiji



Country Snapshot

Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." ↓

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Fiji’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🔗



Fiji does not yet appear to use a whole-of-government definition of social innovation. Public policy more often uses adjacent terms such as social enterprise, which is embedded in the National Employment Centre Act, while the Youth in Agriculture Policy uses the term social innovation in a sector context.

Government Body for Social Innovation✓



The main enabling functions sit with the **Ministry of Commerce and Business Development**, particularly through its work on co-operatives, MSMEs, and business development. While no dedicated social innovation agency was identified, the ministry provides a practical institutional anchor for related activity.

Government Strategy for Social Innovation✓



While Fiji does not have a standalone social innovation strategy, relevant priorities appear across national strategies:

- **National Development Plan 2025–2029 & Vision 2050:** Emphasize resilience, inclusion, and community empowerment.
- **National Climate Change Policy:** Promotes climate-ready livelihoods and social entrepreneurship.
- **National Financial Inclusion Strategy:** Prioritizes underserved groups.
- **National E-commerce Strategy:** Supports MSME growth, digital inclusion, and entrepreneurship among women and youth.

Policies, Laws & Regulations✓🔗



Fiji’s enabling environment is built through adjacent frameworks rather than a dedicated social innovation law. Key examples include:

- **The National Employment Centre Act 2009:** Recognizes social enterprise.
- **The Co-operatives Act 1996:** Providing a legal route for collective enterprise.
- **Public Procurement Guidance:** Linking purchasing to inclusion and SME support.
- **The Access to Business Funding Act 2025:** Expanding finance access.

Official Statistics



Dedicated official statistics for social innovation or the social and solidarity economy were not identified. However, adjacent data exists via administrative co-operative data and broader business statistics. A 2025 update reported **771 co-operatives**, ~40,600 members, FJ\$51M in assets, and FJ\$26M in annual revenue.

Government Programs



Public programs demonstrate practical support for mission-oriented entrepreneurship:

- **Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES):** Offers grants up to FJ\$50,000 and prioritizes innovation, job creation, SDG relevance, and inclusion.
- **Community Enterprise Support:** Includes the Cautata Community Social Enterprise Bakery, backed by government and community funding.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



The ecosystem is anchored by universities, government, and development partners. Key actors include the **University of the South Pacific (USP)**, **Fiji National University (FNU)**, and UNDP-supported regional innovation initiatives.

Support Initiatives



Support is primarily delivered through university platforms rather than a single national hub. USP hosts the **Pacific Regional Innovation Network** and offers entrepreneurship training, while FNU provides related programmes; partners support sector-specific incubation (e.g., childcare enterprises).

Collaboration



Collaboration is a strength of Fiji's ecosystem, with joint initiatives across government, academia, multilateral organizations, and business-support actors, particularly in climate resilience, inclusion, and skills development.

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Fiji's financing landscape combines public, community, and development finance:

- **YES Grants:** Up to FJ\$50,000.
- **Community Enterprise Funding:** (e.g., Cautata Bakery).
- **ADB-supported SME Finance:** Via Merchant Finance (\$4M loan + WE-FI grant).
- **GEF Small Grants Programme:** 210 projects and US\$6.43M (2017–2023).

Inclusiveness of Financing



Inclusivity is a strong feature. Schemes target women, youth, rural and maritime communities, persons with disabilities, and low-income households. Notably, 75% of the ADB-supported facility is earmarked for women-led SMEs.



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public discourse is more visible under related terms such as **social enterprise, co-operatives, inclusive finance, and climate resilience**, indicating practical engagement despite a less prominent national label.



Research

Research is mainly embedded in university and partnership platforms. USP and FNU contribute to applied learning, experimentation, and regional knowledge exchange.



Education

Entrepreneurship education pathways are present. USP offers vocational training, FNU provides entrepreneurship programmes, and national digital strategies support skills for inclusive enterprise.



Entrepreneurship



Business Environment

Doing Business 2020 remains a legacy benchmark



Innovation Capacity

Recent dedicated indicators for social innovation remain limited. The latest verified Global Innovation Index ranking for Fiji is 115 (2015)



Social entrepreneurship

GEM data were not identified.



Social & Environmental Consciousness

Fiji's context creates strong demand for innovation.



Solidarity

ND-GAIN score of 51.2 (rank 82) highlights climate vulnerability and the need for adaptive, community-led solutions.



Political participation

Voter turnout reached 68.3% in 2022



Volunteering



Sustainability