

Enabling Social Innovation in Gibraltar



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 Gibraltar’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 🔗



No official government definition of social innovation was identified. However, the term has appeared in government discourse, particularly in climate education, where social innovation is linked to developing solutions for sustainability challenges. Related policy language focuses on charities, public benefit, nonprofit organisations, community wellbeing, sustainability, and social inclusion. ^{2 3 4}

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓



Gibraltar does not have a dedicated social innovation ministry or agency. Relevant responsibilities are distributed across several government portfolios, including:

- Ministry for Economic Development, Enterprise, Telecommunications and the Gibraltar Savings Bank
- Ministry for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism
- Ministry for Health, Care and Business
- Ministry for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education ⁵

Supporting institutions include:

- Office of Fair Trading (enterprise support and regulation) ⁶
- Board of Charity Commissioners for Gibraltar (charity regulation) ⁷

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓



While Gibraltar has not adopted a standalone social innovation strategy, several government strategies address themes commonly associated with social innovation:

- **Climate Change Strategy (2021)** – promotes sustainable development, climate resilience, behavioural change and green innovation. ⁸
- **25 Year Environment Plan (2025)** – focuses on sustainability, healthy communities, environmental stewardship and green economic opportunities. ⁹
- **National Mental Health Strategy 2021–2026** – promotes community-based services, social inclusion and collaborative approaches to wellbeing. ¹⁰

Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗



Key enabling legislation includes:

- **Charities Act** – governing charitable organisations and public benefit activities. ³
- **Friendly Societies Act** – providing a framework for mutual and community-based organisations. ¹¹
- **Climate Change Act 2019** – establishes legally binding climate targets and governance mechanisms. ¹²
- **Fair Trading Act 2023** – simplifies aspects of business establishment and regulation. ¹³
- **Procurement (Public Sector Contracts) Regulations 2016** and Green Procurement policies encourage sustainable purchasing practices. ^{14 15}

Additional support includes Gift Aid provisions and tax relief mechanisms for registered charities. ¹⁶

Official Statistics



Gibraltar's Statistics Office publishes economic, demographic and labour market statistics. ¹⁷ However, no dedicated official statistical framework was identified for:

- Social innovation
- Social enterprises
- Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)
- Cooperatives

Administrative data are available through charity registers and regulatory records. The territory has nearly 300 registered charities and approximately a dozen Friendly Societies. ^{18 19}

Government Programs



Notable government-supported initiatives include:

- **Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme** – government-backed soft loans for start-ups and businesses operating for less than three years. ^{20 21}
- **Peter J. Isola Start-Up Hub** – subsidised workspace, mentoring and business support for early-stage entrepreneurs. ²²
- **Connect Hub** – launched in 2023 to support financial-sector start-ups and entrepreneurship. ²³
- Participation in the **UK Community Renewal Fund**, with project funding of up to £500,000. ²⁴
- **European Social Fund 2014–2020**, allocating €4.8 million to employment and social inclusion initiatives. ²⁵

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



Gibraltar's ecosystem is relatively small but highly interconnected.

Key actors include:

- **Young Enterprise Gibraltar** – youth entrepreneurship and enterprise education. ²⁶
- **Gibraltar Federation of Small Businesses (GFSB)** – business support and advocacy. ²⁷
- **Kusuma Trust Gibraltar** – philanthropic grant-making, charity support and capacity building. ²⁸
- **University of Gibraltar** – research, education and knowledge exchange. ²⁹
- Environmental organisations including **The Nautilus Project**, **Environmental Safety Group (ESG)** and **Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society (GONHS)**. ³⁰
- **Clubhouse Gibraltar** and other community-based wellbeing organisations. ³¹

Support Initiatives



Support mechanisms include:

- **Young Enterprise Company Programme**, supporting entrepreneurship among students and young people. ²⁶
- **Women's Mentorship Programme**, operating since 2018 and supporting women's leadership and professional development. ³²
- **Start-Up Hub**, providing mentoring and incubation support. ²²
- **Mental Health First Aid Training**, delivered through partnerships between government and civil society. ³³
- **ClimACT Schools Gibraltar** and Carbon Literacy programmes promoting sustainability leadership among students. ^{2 34}

Collaboration

Cross-sector collaboration is common due to Gibraltar's compact ecosystem.

Examples include:

- Joint management of the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme involving government, the Chamber of Commerce and GFSB. ²¹
- Partnerships between government, schools, NGOs and the University of Gibraltar on climate education initiatives. ²
- Environmental partnerships involving government agencies and local NGOs. ³⁰
- Public Service Excellence and Innovation Awards recognising innovative public-sector projects. ³⁵
- Youth Achievement Awards recognising community leadership and volunteering. ³⁶

FINANCE

Financing Schemes

Key financing mechanisms include:

- **Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme** soft loans for start-ups. ²⁰
- **UK Community Renewal Fund** support, offering project grants of up to £500,000. ²⁴
- **European Social Fund 2014–2020**, with a total allocation of €4.8 million. ²⁵
- Historic ERDF-supported innovation projects, including renewable energy and sustainability initiatives. ³⁷
- **Kusuma Trust Gibraltar** grants supporting education, charities and community projects. ²⁸

Additional support includes:

- Gift Aid tax recovery for charities. ¹⁶
- Tax exemptions for qualifying charitable organisations. ⁴
- Subsidised facilities through the Start-Up Hub. ²²

Financing Inclusivity

Several initiatives support inclusion, although no dedicated social innovation fund was identified.

Examples include:

- Women's Mentorship Programme supporting women's advancement. ³²
- Young Enterprise and entrepreneurship initiatives targeting youth. ²⁶
- Government policies supporting equality, disability inclusion, supported employment and minority groups. ⁵

Given Gibraltar's highly urban geography, no rural-focused funding schemes were identified.

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Although social innovation is not widely used as a policy label, related themes are visible in public discourse through:

- Climate action initiatives
- Mental health programmes
- Equality and inclusion policies
- Youth entrepreneurship activities
- Public-sector innovation awards ^{2 10 35}

Research

The University of Gibraltar plays a central role in research relevant to social innovation.

Key activities include:

- Research addressing public-sector and voluntary-sector challenges. ²⁹
- Business, Management and Law Research Hub focusing on governance, sustainability and public policy. ³⁸
- Centre of Excellence in Responsible Gaming addressing public health and social wellbeing issues. ³⁹

Education & Human Capital



Gibraltar demonstrates strong investment in education and skills development.

Examples include:

- University of Gibraltar MBA programme incorporating entrepreneurship and sustainability perspectives.⁴⁰
- Young Enterprise programmes in schools and colleges.²⁶
- ClimACT Schools and Carbon Literacy initiatives.³⁴
- Teacher training and climate education programmes linked to the UN Climate Change Teacher Academy.²

Entrepreneurship

International entrepreneurship benchmarking remains limited for Gibraltar.



Business Environment

Gibraltar is included within the World Bank's B-READY business environment framework, although no overall public ranking was identified.⁴³



Innovation Capacity

No current standalone Global Innovation Index ranking was identified.⁴¹



Social entrepreneurship

No dedicated Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) dataset was located.⁴²

Nonetheless, government-backed enterprise support, start-up hubs and business development programmes demonstrate continued commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation.^{20 22}

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Gibraltar demonstrates strong civic and environmental engagement.

Key indicators include:



EU Climate Action Progress

Legally binding climate targets, including **net zero emissions by 2045**.¹²

Official greenhouse gas monitoring and annual reporting systems.⁴⁶

2023 greenhouse gas inventory reporting a 25% reduction in manageable emissions compared with 2015 levels.⁴⁶



Political participation

Voter turnout of 76.41% in the 2023 General Election.⁴⁴



Volunteering

Active charity sector with nearly 300 registered charities.¹²

Government-supported volunteering and community recognition initiatives.^{36 45}



Sustainability

A standalone Environmental Performance Index ranking for Gibraltar was not identified.⁴⁷