

Enabling Social Innovation in Marshall Islands

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 Marshall Islands’ 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



While there is no official legal definition of social innovation, government policies promote related concepts including women’s economic empowerment, youth development, social protection, entrepreneurship, digital transformation, climate resilience, and community-based development. The Digital Transformation and Identity Verification Act (2025) explicitly refers to the use of government data to “spur innovation.”

Government Body for Social Innovation



Rather than a dedicated social innovation agency, responsibility is distributed across several institutions. Key actors include the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (women, youth and community programs), the Ministry of Finance, Banking and Postal Services (financial inclusion, climate finance and WYSER implementation), the Climate Change Directorate, the National Training Council, and the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office.

Government Strategy for Social Innovation



While there is no standalone social innovation strategy, **Agenda 2030: A Pathway for a Resilient and Prosperous Future (2024)** provides a broad framework supporting women’s empowerment, youth development, social protection, digital transformation, climate resilience, financial inclusion, and community development. Additional enabling frameworks include the National Investment Policy Statement 2020–2025, Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030, and National Adaptation Plan.

Policies, Laws & Regulations



While no dedicated social innovation legislation exists, several laws create enabling conditions:

- Digital Transformation and Identity Verification Act (2025) supports digital innovation and government modernization.
- Marshall Islands Resilience and Adaptation Trust Fund Act (2022) establishes the MIRA climate-resilience financing mechanism.
- Ministry of Environment Act (2018) promotes climate adaptation, sustainability financing, and resilience planning.
- Associations Law and Other Forms of Association Act provide frameworks for nonprofit and association registration.
- Foreign Investment Business License Act (1990) supports enterprise development and investment.

Official Statistics



While no official statistics specifically track social innovation or social enterprises, the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) maintains major national datasets including the Population and Housing Census and Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Administrative data on associations and nonprofits are also collected.

Government Programs



- Key government-supported programs include:
- **Women and Youth Skills, Empowerment and Resilience (WYSER) Project** (2024–present), supporting skills development, livelihoods, resilience, childcare, counselling and social services.
 - **Education and Skills Strengthening Project (ESSP)**, supporting vocational training, labour-market matching and skills development.
 - **Digital RMI Project**, expanding digital infrastructure and access across all inhabited islands.
 - National Adaptation Plan implementation and awareness initiatives supporting community resilience and local engagement.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



- Key ecosystem actors include:
- **Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI)**, supporting women’s empowerment and community development.
 - **Jo-Jikum**, a youth-led climate and civic engagement organization.
 - **Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS)**, promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable livelihoods.
 - **College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)** and **University of the South Pacific (USP) Marshall Islands Campus**, supporting entrepreneurship, skills development and applied research.

Support Initiatives



Formal social innovation incubators are limited. Support is mainly provided through entrepreneurship education, livelihood programs, climate-resilience initiatives, technical training, and donor-supported community development programs. CMI’s strategic plan includes ambitions for business incubation and startup support

Collaboration



Partnerships are a defining feature of the ecosystem. Government agencies collaborate extensively with NGOs, multilateral organizations, donors and community groups. Examples include National Adaptation Plan implementation partnerships involving government, IOM, WUTMI, Jo-Jikum and MICS, as well as Climate Change Week outreach activities.

FINANCE

Financing Scheme



- The financing landscape is dominated by development and climate finance:
- WYSER Project: approximately USD 19.7–21 million.
 - Education and Skills Strengthening Project: USD 10 million.
 - Pacific Resilience Project Phase II (GCF): USD 25 million plus co-financing.
 - Addressing Climate Vulnerability in the Water Sector (ACWA): USD 18.6 million plus co-financing.
 - Ecosystem-based Adaptation Small Grants Facility: USD 8.9 million plus co-financing.
 - Marshall Islands Resilience and Adaptation (MIRA) Trust Fund provides a domestic resilience financing vehicle.



Financing Inclusivity

Many financing programs explicitly prioritize women, youth, persons with disabilities, vulnerable households, and residents of outer islands. VYSER, ESSP and climate-adaptation projects all contain targeted inclusion measures.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

While social innovation is not widely used as a public policy term, related themes such as community resilience, climate adaptation, women’s empowerment, youth leadership, and digital transformation feature prominently in public discourse and government communications.



Research ✓ 🔗

Research capacity is centered around the College of the Marshall Islands, USP Marshall Islands Campus, and the Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport. Research activity is strongest in sustainability, transport, climate resilience, and community development rather than social innovation specifically.



Education & Human Capital ✓ 🔗

Entrepreneurship and business education are available through CMI and USP. The National Training Council supports workforce development and vocational skills, while ESSP strengthens secondary, vocational and post-secondary pathways. No dedicated degree programs in social innovation were identified.



Entrepreneurship



Business Environment

The World Bank’s Business Ready (B-READY) framework now covers Marshall Islands indicators, although no consolidated national score was identified.



Innovation Capacity

country ranking was identified.

Global Innovation Index 2025



Social entrepreneurship

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM): No recent Marshall Islands-specific GEM



Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

ND-GAIN Climate Readiness Index: ranked 136th globally.



Political participation

Voter turnout reached approximately 33% in the 2023 parliamentary election.



EU Climate Action Progress

Marshall Islands has committed to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 45% below 2010 levels by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.



Sustainability

Environmental Performance Index 2024: ranked 108th globally with a score of 42.5.

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024