

Enabling Social Innovation in Peru



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 Peru’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 🔗

Peru does not appear to use a single, whole-of-government legal definition of “social innovation.” Instead, the concept is operationalized through targeted public programs and challenge funds co-led by ministries, where “innovación social” is framed as developing innovative solutions to defined social challenges and piloting/implementing them with a view to later scale-up. ²



Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

A key public-sector anchor is Ayni Lab Social within Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, referenced in joint innovation challenge documentation as the unit promoting the generation of “innovaciones sociales” that are original, transferable/reproducible, cost-effective, and scalable. ²
In practice, this positioning links social innovation to:
Evidence-informed social policy and delivery improvement
Pilots designed to generate implementation lessons for later national scaling by the social sector.



Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

- Peru’s enabling environment for social innovation is primarily strategy-by-proxy (innovation, R&D, public-sector modernization, and inclusion), rather than a standalone national social innovation strategy. Key strategy signals in the ecosystem include:
- Innovation and competitiveness agendas implemented through Ministry of Production programs and challenge-style, problem-driven calls. ²
- A national-scale science/technology/innovation framing (2030 horizon) promoted through CONCYTEC policy instruments and coordination documents. ³



Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓

Rather than SI-specific legislation, Peru’s most visible “rules of the game” for social innovation are embedded in program rules and public financing instruments. The social innovation challenge fund (referenced below) notably specifies:
Eligible applicant types: universities, research centers, nonprofits, companies, and technical institutes (with minimum operational requirements). ²
Implementation requirement: funded projects must reach pilot implementation during the project period, and document lessons to enable later scale-up. ²
IP/public-interest safeguards: the social sector reserves certain non-exclusive use rights to ensure beneficiary access and policy usability. ²

Official statistics



Peru does not publish a widely recognized official “social innovation statistics series” comparable to labor statistics or national accounts. However, INEI provides official survey microdata infrastructure that can support measurement of adjacent concepts (e.g., poverty and social inclusion outcomes, firm dynamics, labor informality, service access, and civic participation proxies). ⁴

Government Programs



Peru’s most concrete social-innovation public action is challenge-driven and problem-specific, reflecting social-policy priorities for vulnerable populations. A flagship example is a joint mechanism where the innovation/competitiveness program and the social sector co-design “retos” (challenge areas) and co-finance R&D+i projects that must deliver an implemented solution. ²

Illustrative challenge areas referenced in one such call include:

Access and management of safe water in the Amazon region

Iron-fortified foods to reduce/prevent childhood anemia

Cost-effective mechanisms for delivering cash transfers to remote rural households. ²

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



The ecosystem is multi-actor and typically organized around delivery problems (health, nutrition, water, financial inclusion, rural access).

Common stakeholder roles implied by public program design include:

Public sector: social sector policy owners; production/innovation agencies; sector regulators and implementers

Knowledge actors: universities and research centers (applied research, prototyping, evaluation)

Civil society: nonprofits and community organizations (last-mile delivery, trust, field implementation)

Private sector: solution providers and integrators supporting scaling pathways (products/logistics/fintech) ².

Support initiatives



In addition to formal public programs, Peru hosts complementary “innovation for development” infrastructure. For example, United Nations Development Programme operates an innovation lab approach through its country-level UNDP Accelerator Labs model (including Peru), oriented toward experimentation, learning, and scaling development solutions with partners. ⁵

Collaboration



The public social-innovation model is explicitly collaborative by design:

Joint agenda setting between social-policy and innovation/competitiveness institutions

Co-designed challenges and shared implementation responsibilities

Articulated pathways from pilot lessons to later policy/service scaling (typically led by the social sector) ²

A further ecosystem signal is the use of external development finance to underwrite innovation capability building (see Finance section). ²

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Peru has demonstrated an ability to mobilize dedicated, SI-adjacent financing through challenge funds that link innovation and social inclusion. In one documented call:
Total call budget: S/ 2,500,000 for co-financed projects ².
Maximum (reference amounts by challenge): S/ 300,000–S/ 500,000 per project, depending on the challenge area (as presented in the financing matrix). ²
Co-financing structure in that call: up to 90% non-reimbursable resources, with the remainder as monetary and/or in-kind counterpart contributions. ²

Role of International Development Finance



The same instrument explicitly cites an Inter-American Development Bank loan framework as a funding origin (BID contract referenced), indicating that development finance has been used to strengthen Peru’s innovation market and public-interest R&D+i capacity. ²

What this suggests about the financing landscape



Peru’s SI-related financing is best characterized as:
Competitive, project-based, and challenge-oriented (rather than entitlement-based)
Strongly linked to measurable implementation milestones (pilot delivery)
Structured to encourage cross-sector consortia (universities, nonprofits, and firms). ²

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of social innovation



Social innovation visibility is boosted through highly legible public challenge framing (clear “retos,” defined target populations, and implementable solutions). ²
Complementary signals of civic engagement and “pro-social” action are visible in global giving datasets: In the World Giving Index (2024), 25% of adults in Peru reported volunteering time (past-month measure), and 68% reported helping a stranger (past-month measure). ⁶

Research



Peru’s research capacity for entrepreneurship and ecosystem measurement is supported by university-based participation in global measurement initiatives (useful for social innovation ecosystem analysis even when not SI-specific). For example, Centrum PUCP Business School has communicated its role in assembling a national team for Global Entrepreneurship Monitor work in Peru. ⁷

Education & Human Capital



Peru’s human-capital base for social innovation is shaped by:
University and research-center eligibility within SI challenge funds (institutional incentives for applied research and field experimentation). ²
Open access to official microdata that can be used in evaluation and learning loops (policy labs, universities, and NGOs). ⁴

Entrepreneurship

Two widely used global signals relevant to a social innovation ecosystem are innovation performance and entrepreneurial/civic conditions:



EIU Business Environment Ranking



Innovation Capacity

Peru ranks 80th (of 139 economies listed on the GII country ranking page for 2025).⁸

Global Innovation Index 2025



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Two brief, policy-relevant proxies are civic generosity and environmental performance:



Solidarity



Political participation

Democracy Index (2024): Peru is scored at 5.69 overall (rank 78), with a political participation sub-score of 5.00/10.²



Volunteering

Peru's volunteering participation is 25% (World Giving Index 2024).⁴



Sustainability

Peru ranks 85/180 with an EPI score of 46.5; the Climate Change category is ranked 101 with a score of 40.7.¹⁰

Environmental Performance Index (2024)