

Enabling Social Innovation in Sudan



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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 Sudan’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 🔗

While a standalone official definition of social innovation was not publicly identified, adjacent public language is visible around social protection, innovation, entrepreneurship and, in a Central Bank publication on microfinance, social business.



Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

Rather than a dedicated government body for social innovation, relevant functions are distributed across:

- the **Ministry of Human Resources and Social Care**, which covers social protection, poverty reduction and social solidarity;
- the **Central Bank of Sudan**, which runs the microfinance policy framework and guarantee mechanisms; and
- the **Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation**, which leads delivery arrangements for major rural resilience programmes.



Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

While there is no standalone national strategy for social innovation, related enabling strategies are visible. UNICEF reports that partnership with government culminated in drafting Sudan’s first **National Social Protection Strategy**, and a 2025 Ministry of Justice statement notes that the strategy was approved in January 2023.

Related strategic documents also point to an enabling direction: the Central Bank’s **Strategic Recovery and Transformation Plan 2026–2030** prioritizes financial inclusion, digital transformation, legal modernization, productive sectors and microfinance, while IFAD notes that Sudan’s agricultural orientation is informed by a **Food System Transformation Action Plan 2022–2030**.



Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗

While no dedicated social enterprise law was found, several adjacent frameworks matter:

- the **Voluntary and Humanitarian Work laws of 2006 and 2018** shape the operating space for civil society organisations;
- the **Cooperative Law of 1999** remains a key reference point; and
- **Central Bank microfinance policies** cited here include a requirement for banks to allocate at least 12 percent of their portfolios to microfinance, alongside simplified guarantees, use of community organisations and guarantee institutions.

Official Statistics



Publicly accessible official statistics specifically for social innovation, social enterprise or the social and solidarity economy were not identified. The more visible official data pipeline is in banking and microfinance, while many comparative entrepreneurship indicators are supplied by international datasets.

Government Programs



A visible public programme in the wider enabling environment is the **Sudan Family Support Program**, known as **Thamarat**. Introduced in 2020, it aimed to provide monthly cash transfers of US\$5 per family member, initially targeting 80 percent of the population; by project closing it had reached around 8.7 million people.

Public support is also visible through the microfinance policy regime, which treats poverty mitigation, inclusion and small-scale livelihoods as part of the banking system's mandate.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



Accessible public evidence points to a mixed ecosystem of development agencies, universities and applied research organisations. Key actors include the **UNDP Sudan Accelerator Lab**, the **University of Science and Technology's entrepreneurship centre**, the **National University's Wataniya Entrepreneurship Incubation Hub**, and the **Industrial Research and Consultancy Center**.

Support Initiatives



Visible support initiatives include UNDP's youth employment and entrepreneurship work in Darfur; livelihood programming with micro-grants, vocational support, savings schemes and market access; and university-based incubation and training.

Collaboration

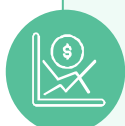


Collaboration is visible in donor-backed and research-policy examples: UNDP's Darfur entrepreneurship work is supported by KOICA, Japan and UNV, while IRCC has convened SDG and science, technology and innovation policy events.

Government-linked digital engagement is also present through the National Information Center's "**Girls in Technology**" initiative, which promotes digital skills and innovation among girls.

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Sudan's financing landscape appears shaped more by inclusion-oriented finance and development finance than by dedicated impact-investing instruments.

- **Central Bank policy** cited here directs banks to allocate at least 12 percent of finance portfolios to microfinance and supports a Microfinance Guarantee Agency.
- A **CBOS publication** presents IbdAA Microfinance Bank Sudan as operating on a social business model, with initial capital of US\$5 million from Sudanese and regional partners.
- The **Sudan Family Support Program** mobilized large-scale donor-backed social transfers.
- **IFAD** reports long-term development finance in Sudan and notes that since 1979 it has funded 22 projects with a total cost of US\$875 million, including the US\$49.69 million IAMDP.



Financing Inclusivity

Inclusivity is explicit in several public and donor-backed financing channels, which target vulnerable households, rural producers, women, youth, conflict-affected areas and internally displaced people. UNDP and IFAD programmes also give attention to women, youth and vulnerable rural groups.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public awareness is visible mainly through adjacent discourse rather than a formal social innovation narrative. Government communication links innovation and intellectual property to sustainable development, while the National Information Center and UNDP promote digital innovation, experimentation and local problem-solving.



Research

The **Industrial Research and Consultancy Center** is an important anchor. Established in 1965 with UNIDO support, it operates as a national noncommercial research centre, and its Institute for Industrial Policy Studies links industrial strategy to the SDGs and innovation policy.



Education & Human Capital

University-linked entrepreneurship support is visible. The **University of Science and Technology** established its entrepreneurship centre in 2016 and offers startup training, while the **National University's incubation hub** is recruiting founders. Digital capability is also entering the ecosystem through university and public-sector channels, including entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence and digital transformation programming.



Entrepreneurship

Comparable cross-country indicators suggest both constraints and potential.



EIU Business Environment Ranking

The World Bank's final Doing Business profile placed Sudan at 171 in 2020



Innovation Capacity

A UNESCWA ISPAR page reports Sudan's Global Innovation Index rank at 128 in 2025



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

WIPO also notes one science and technology cluster in the 2024 GII cluster analysis and records a strong GEM-linked indication of social entrepreneurship

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Accessible comparative indicators point to a demanding environmental context.



Solidarity

184th in the ND-GAIN Country Index, with a score of 31.3



Political participation

For political participation, V-Dem continues to track Sudan through its participatory democracy measures, indicating that participation remains part of the country’s comparative governance evidence base.



Volunteering

Recent country-comparable figures for volunteerism and solidarity were not clearly retrievable from accessible public pages reviewed here.



Sustainability

Sudan ranks 131st in the 2024 Environmental Performance Index, with a score of 39.1