

Enabling Social Innovation in The United Republic of Tanzania

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 Tanzania'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 🔗

Public evidence of an official, cross-government definition of "social innovation" was not identified; policy language more commonly refers to innovation/STI, entrepreneurship, and public benefit community development. ^{2 3 5}

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

There is no single, designated government body for social innovation; responsibilities relevant to enabling social innovation are distributed across STI, social development, and economic governance. Key public enablers include:

- STI policy and coordination: the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) (established 1986), to coordinate research and technology development. It acts as the chief advisor to the government on science, technology, and innovation (STI) policy. ³
- Civil society enabling environment: national NGOs policy and regulation are hosted by the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups. ^{5 6}
- Market access lever: the Public Procurement Act provides the core procurement framework shaping supplier participation. ⁸

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

While a standalone "social innovation strategy" is not identified, related priorities appear in national development, innovation and digital strategies.

- Tanzania's National Five Years Development Plan (FYDP) III (2021/22–2025/26) positions STI, innovation, entrepreneurship and digitalisation as enablers of competitiveness and human development, and references innovation financing and ecosystem support. ²
- Digital transformation: the Tanzania ICT Commission Digital Economy Strategic Framework (2024–2034) sets priorities that can strengthen digitally enabled innovation models, including those with social impact. ¹⁴
- Innovation infrastructure: national guidance exists for establishing Technology and Innovation Centres (TICs). ⁴



Policies, Laws & Regulations

While there is no dedicated social innovation or social enterprise law, socially oriented activity is enabled through existing organisational forms and cross-cutting regulation, including:

- NGOs and community organisations: NGOs Policy (2001) and Non-Governmental Organisations Act (R.E. 2023). [5](#) [6](#)
- Cooperatives: Cooperative Societies Act (2013). [7](#)
- Inclusive finance: Microfinance Act (2018) provides the framework for microfinance business and supervision in mainland Tanzania. [2](#)
- Procurement: Public Procurement Act (2023). [8](#)



Official Statistics

There are no official statistics related to “social innovation”. However, the National Bureau of Statistics publishes core socio-economic statistics (e.g., “Tanzania in Figures”), and administrative registers for NGOs and cooperatives can support adjacent analysis (subject to access and publication). [11](#) [6](#) [7](#)



Government Programs

Government support relevant to social innovation is primarily anchored in STI ecosystem strengthening and inclusive entrepreneurship finance.

- FYDP III references national innovation financing mechanisms and ecosystem support (including NFAST). [2](#)
- MoEST guidance promotes identification and diffusion of inventions/innovations and references national awards (e.g., TASTA, NARST). [3](#)
- Inclusive local entrepreneurship loans: budgeting guidance for 2024/25 references council-level financing for women, youth, and persons with disabilities (often delivered as “10% loans”). [10](#)

ECOSYSTEM



Stakeholders

Key actors span public STI organisations and development partners with innovation platforms.

- Public STI ecosystem: MoEST/COSTECH and innovation centres (TICs) within the national STI architecture. [3](#) [4](#)
- Development partners: the United Nations Development Programme Accelerator Lab and UNICEF innovation programmes in Tanzania. [12](#) [13](#)



Support Initiatives

- UNDP Accelerator Lab: experimentation and learning platform for development solutions. [12](#)
- UNICEF innovation: youth-oriented innovation and partnerships to address social challenges (including in education). [13](#)



Collaboration

- Recognition and diffusion: national awards and promotion mechanisms for inventions/innovations. [3](#)
- Procurement as a collaboration lever: the national procurement framework can support broader participation when implemented with inclusivity and sustainability objectives. [8](#)

FINANCE

Financing Schemes

- National innovation financing: FYDP III references NFAST as part of the research and innovation financing landscape.²
- Locally administered entrepreneurship loans: budgeting guidance supports council-level lending to priority groups.¹⁰
- Regulated inclusive finance: the Microfinance Act provides a formal basis for licensed microfinance and related services.²

Financing Inclusivity

- Explicit targeting: women, youth and persons with disabilities are referenced in local government financing guidance.¹⁰
- Youth focus in innovation programming: UNICEF targets adolescents and young adults (15–24).¹³

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public discourse is more often framed as innovation-for-development, entrepreneurship and digitally enabled solutions, rather than “social innovation” as a distinct policy category.^{2 12}

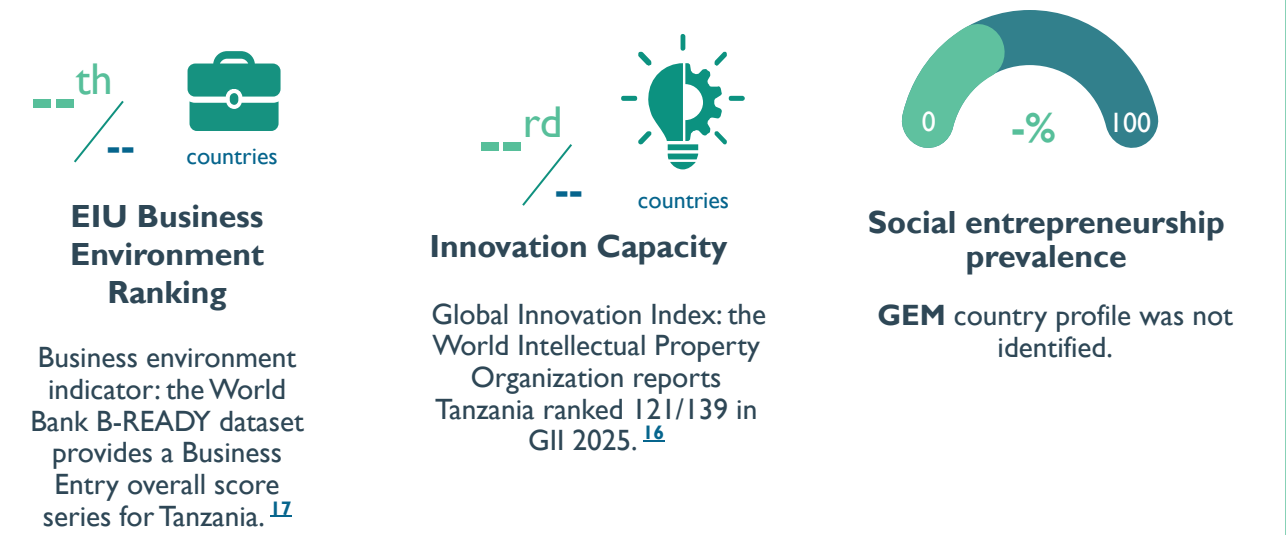
Research

- MoEST guidance promotes pathways from ideas to practical use through identification and diffusion of inventions/innovations.³
- FYDP III positions research and innovation as part of national transformation priorities.²

Education & Human Capital

- MoEST’s draft National Digital Education Strategy (2024–2030) supports digital learning and system strengthening relevant to innovation capability.¹⁵
- FYDP III links human capital development to economic transformation pathways.²

Entrepreneurship



Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative publishes a Tanzania country profile, ND-GAIN Country Index ranks Tanzania at 150 with a score of 39.8 on the climate vulnerability and readiness. ¹⁹



Political participation

Participation data: Our World in Data hosts the V-Dem participatory democracy index series for comparative analysis, placing Tanzania's participatory democracy index at 0.24 in 2025. ²¹



population

Volunteering

Giving/solidarity proxy: Charities Aid Foundation donor insights provide a comparable metric on income donated in Tanzania, with 'direct giving' being the highest percentage, followed by 'religious giving' and finally 'charitable giving'. ²⁰

102th / 180



countries

Sustainability

Yale University's Environmental performance Index 2024 ranks Tanzania at 102. ¹⁸

