

Enabling Social Innovation in Tuvalu



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 Tuvalu’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 no formal government definition of social innovation was identified, the enabling environment is described through adjacent concepts such as non-governmental organizations, co-operative societies, community participation, inclusive development, and digital transformation.

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓



While there is no dedicated social innovation agency, several public bodies shape the enabling environment:

- The Department of Home Affairs supports local government, community affairs, environment, and climate-related functions.
- The Youth Department supports youth participation in policy and development partnerships.
- The Development Bank of Tuvalu has a statutory mandate to support long-term economic and social development.

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓



While there is no standalone strategy for social innovation, relevant elements are embedded in broader national strategies:

- *Te Kete 2021–2030* promotes community participation, gender and disability inclusion, and innovative engagement platforms.
- The National ICT Policy links innovation to digital inclusion, public services, e-commerce, digital finance, and emerging technologies.

Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗



The policy framework is indirect but relevant:

- The Incorporation of Non-Governmental Organizations Act creates the legal basis for nonprofit organizations.
- The Co-operative Societies Act supports member-based economic organization through co-operative principles.
- Public procurement is managed through the Central Procurement Unit under the Public Procurement Act, supporting transparent public spending.
- The Development Bank of Tuvalu Act provides a formal public-finance channel for development-oriented investment.

Official Statistics



Tuvalu has an active official statistics system led by the Central Statistics Division and complemented by sector reporting from the education system. However, no dedicated official statistical series on social innovation, social enterprise, or the social and solidarity economy were identified.

Government Programs



Several public programs create enabling conditions for social innovation:

- The Tuvalu Learning Project (2020–2025), financed through a US\$14 million IDA grant, focuses on learning, inclusion, and community engagement.
- The Tuvalu Development Fund oversees a large portfolio of development projects supported by international partners.
- The 2025–2026 Budget Speech announced an A\$1 million capital injection into the Development Bank of Tuvalu to improve access to finance for women and youth.
- The Citizen Budget Guide initiative supports participatory governance and public understanding of budgeting processes.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders



Tuvalu’s ecosystem is compact but community-oriented:

- TANGO serves as the umbrella NGO body and an interface between civil society, government, and development partners.
- Traditional institutions such as the Falekaupule and Kaupule remain important local actors in participation and service delivery.
- Inclusion-oriented actors include the Tuvalu National Council of Women and Fusi Alofa Association.

Support Initiatives



Support is visible mainly through practical capacity-building initiatives:

- The Tuvalu Early Childhood Community of Practice supports peer learning and service improvement among educators.
- The Inclusive Education Resource Centre strengthens inclusive teaching and support services.
- Digital policy and public-sector modernization initiatives create additional space for local service innovation.

Collaboration



Collaboration is a notable strength within Tuvalu’s ecosystem:

- The Citizen Budget Guide involved government, oversight institutions, civil society, and development partners.
- Early childhood education is delivered through collaboration among communities, Kaupule, NGOs, private providers, and the Education Department.

FINANCE

Financing Schemes



Tuvalu’s financing landscape is shaped mainly by public finance and development partners:

- The Tuvalu Development Fund remains the main pooled development financing vehicle.
- The Development Bank of Tuvalu provides long-term economic and social financing.
- International financing supports education, health, trade facilitation, and climate resilience initiatives.



Financing Inclusivity

Inclusivity is visible in several financing measures:

- The 2025–2026 budget links new Development Bank capital to improved access for women and youth.
- Public outreach and digital-access initiatives extend services to outer islands.
- *Te Kete* reinforces gender inclusion, disability inclusion, and broad participation as national priorities.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Public awareness is strongest around inclusive governance, digital access, education, and climate resilience. While the term “social innovation” is not widely institutionalized, public discourse increasingly focuses on new approaches to citizen engagement and service delivery.



Research

No dedicated social innovation research centre was identified. Existing foundations are stronger in official data production, education reporting, and policy-linked surveys.



Education & Human Capital

Tuvalu’s education system provides a constructive base for social innovation:

- National education policy emphasizes sustainable living, participation, responsibility, and community values.
- TVET, the University of the South Pacific campus, and national scholarships support skills development.



Entrepreneurship



EIU Business Environment Ranking

The World Bank’s B-READY framework now includes Tuvalu pages, while ongoing digital and trade reforms may strengthen the enabling environment over time.



Innovation Capacity

No current Tuvalu-specific Global Innovation Index rank or GEM profile was identified in accessible global publications.



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

Entrepreneurship metrics remain only partially visible in international benchmarking

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Tuvalu’s social and environmental context gives social innovation high relevance:



Solidarity

ND-GAIN ranks the country 70th globally for vulnerability and readiness.



Political participation

International IDEA reported high turnout in the January 2024 election, though no official turnout figure was publicly available in the reviewed source.



Volunteering

The UNV portal reports active community volunteering narratives, although no official volunteerism dataset was identified.



Sustainability

Tuvalu was not assigned a 2024 Environmental Performance Index rank because of insufficient data coverage.

