

Enabling Social Innovation in Brazil



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 Brazil'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 🔗



Brazil does not have a legal definition of social innovation. The Innovation Law (10.973/2004) defines innovation as novelty or improvement in productive **or social environments**, which is commonly applied to social innovation practice. Academic usage emphasises innovative responses that improve social relations and reduce inequalities.

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓



Impact Economy Committee (2023): Coordinates the National Impact Economy Strategy (ENIMPACTO), aligning ministries, investors and civil society on scaling social and environmental solutions.

SEDES – Secretariat for Science and Technology for Social Development (MCTI): Integrates innovation with social-inclusion and territorial-development programmes.

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓



ENIMPACTO (2017; renewed 2023): National strategy to expand social-impact businesses, strengthen intermediaries, improve regulation, promote impact measurement, and integrate impact solutions into public policy.

National STI Strategy 2023–2030: Prioritises inclusive innovation for inequality reduction, bioeconomy growth and climate resilience.

Nova Indústria Brasil (2024–2033): Mission-oriented industrial agenda indirectly enabling SI by prioritising sustainable cities, food security and digital inclusion.

Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗

Direct SI relevance:

- **Decree 11.646/2023 (ENIMPACTO):** Formalises Brazil's federal SI agenda and recognises impact businesses as tools for addressing social and environmental issues.
- **Innovation Law 10.973/2004:** Enables collaboration across research institutions, enterprises and social actors.

Broader enabling policies:

- **Public Procurement Law 14.133/2021:** Allows social-value and ESG criteria in tenders, enabling public scaling of SI solutions .
- **R&D incentives (Lei do Bem):** Mobilise resources for innovation projects, including social technologies.
- **CEBAS incentives:** Reduce tax burdens for non-profit education, health and social-assistance organisations delivering SI services.



Official Statistics

Brazil does not maintain SI-specific statistical series. Relevant datasets include:

- **SIES – Solidarity Economy Information System:** Maps cooperatives, associations and community enterprises contributing to social innovation ecosystems.
- **Cadimacto (2025–):** Tracks enterprises generating verified socio-environmental impact.
- IBGE datasets on cooperatives and social-economy structures indirectly inform SI analysis.

Government Programs

- **ENIMPACTO Action Plans:** Multi-year initiatives strengthening SI infrastructure (e.g., business support, impact measurement, procurement).
- **InovAtiva de Impacto Socioambiental:** National programme offering training, mentoring and investor connections for social innovators.
- **Mais Inovação Brasil:** Large-scale financing (≈R\$60bn) that supports inclusive, climate and social-tech innovations.
- **Social policy innovations**, including Bolsa Família, act as platforms enabling SI organisations to serve vulnerable communities more effectively.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders

Prominent non-governmental SI actors:

- **Banco Palmas:** Pioneer community development bank using solidarity finance, local currency and community governance as tools for social innovation.
- **Rede Mulher Empreendedora (RME):** Expands women's economic inclusion through training, mentoring and SI-focused entrepreneurship support.
- **Estante Mágica:** National education innovation enabling children to publish books, strengthening literacy and civic imagination at scale.

Key SI support organisations:

- **Artemisia:** Leading national accelerator for social-impact businesses.
- **Quintessa:** Accelerator and advisory supporting SI ventures in climate, social inclusion and territorial development.
- **InovAtiva network:** Free national acceleration for startups, including an SI-specific track.
- **OBISF (UDESC):** University observatory mapping local SI actions and supporting research–practice collaboration.

Support Initiatives

Main SI support types include:

- **Incubation and acceleration programmes** (Artemisia, Quintessa, InovAtiva de Impacto).
- **Community-based finance models** (Banco Palmas and networked community banks).
- **Ecosystem mapping and research platforms** (Pipe.Social's *Mapa de Negócios de Impacto*; university observatories).

These initiatives commonly focus on poverty reduction, gender equity, education, community development and climate solutions.

Collaboration

- **Public–impact partnerships through ENIMPACTO** promote scaling SI models into federal agendas.
- **Community-bank replication networks** share Banco Palmas' methodologies to disseminate social-finance innovations nationally.



Events & Awards

Brazil hosts regional SI-related forums (impact investing, climate justice, social entrepreneurship), accelerator demo days, municipal innovation festivals and thematic awards recognising high-impact social ventures.

FINANCE



Financing Schemes

Although no national SI finance total exists, Brazil mobilises significant public and private capital:

- **Public development finance (BNDES, Finep):** Provides low-interest loans, grants, equity and guarantees for social-tech, inclusion and community-development innovation.
- **Mission-driven financing (Mais Inovação, NIB):** Directs large volumes of capital to green, territorial and inclusive innovation.
- **Impact-investment sector:** Rapidly expanding, with national targets aiming to grow assets more than tenfold.
- **Inclusive finance:** Community banks, solidarity-finance networks, microcredit programmes and gender-/race-lens philanthropic funds support underrepresented innovators.



Financing Inclusivity

Financing is increasingly diverse but still unevenly accessible. Urban SI ventures and well-networked entrepreneurs benefit most. Expanding models—community banks, women-focused microcredit, Black-entrepreneurship funds and Indigenous innovation initiatives—are improving capital access in underserved communities.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

While “social innovation” is not widely used, related themes—impact entrepreneurship, community finance, gender-inclusive innovation, solidarity economy, climate justice—are prominent in Brazilian media, philanthropy and policy debate.



Research

Brazil is a recognised contributor to global SI scholarship:

- Academic work focuses on SI typologies, solidarity economy, territorial innovation and governance models.
- **OBISF** and several federal-university centres conduct applied SI research.
- Practitioner research (e.g., *Mapa de Negócios de Impacto*) informs investors and intermediaries.
- Brazil is frequently used as a case study in international SI and impact-investing research.



Education & Human Capital

- **Universities:** Social innovation content integrated into business, public policy and innovation programmes; growing number of SI labs and extension projects.
- **Non-formal learning:** Major accelerators (Artemisia, RME, InovAtiva) provide SI-focused skills development, with strong emphasis on early-stage innovators and inclusion.

Formal SI degrees remain limited; most SI competencies are developed through applied learning and entrepreneurship pathways.

Entrepreneurship



Business environment

~51st globally (EIU), reflecting a mix of opportunity and structural barriers.



Innovation Capacity

Rank 52nd in the Global Innovation Index.



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

One of the world’s highest rates of early-stage entrepreneurship, with strong social- and opportunity-driven motivations.

Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

Low interpersonal trust but strong public support for social policies addressing inequality.



Political participation

Classified as a “flawed democracy” with robust civic engagement.



Volunteering

Moderate levels, improving gradually.



Sustainability

EPI rank 47th, reflecting mixed climate outcomes but recent improvements in deforestation control.