

Enabling Social Innovation in Ecuador



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 Ecuador’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 🔗

Ecuador has **no official legal** definition of social innovation. Related concepts appear in policies linked to inclusive development and the social/solidarity economy.



Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

There is **no dedicated national body**. Relevant roles are shared by:

- **MIES** – community and social inclusion programmes.
- **MPCEIP** – entrepreneurship and inclusive business.
- **SENESCYT** – national innovation, science and technology policy.



Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

There is **no national SI strategy**, but SI-related themes appear in:

- **Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (2017–2021)** – innovation, social economy, inclusion.
- **Ecuador Innovador Agenda (2020)** – innovation ecosystem strengthening.
- Policies supporting the Popular and Solidarity Economy.



Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗

Direct links:

- **Organic Law on Popular and Solidarity Economy (2011)**: Key enabling framework for cooperatives and community enterprises.
- **Código Ingenios (2016)**: Strengthens innovation and entrepreneurship.

Broader enablers:

- Public procurement preferences for social-economy actors.
- Tax incentives for EPS organisations.



Official Statistics 🔗

No SI-specific statistics. Relevant data include:

- **SEPS** cooperative and association statistics.
- **SENESCYT** innovation indicators.



Government Programs

Examples supporting SI-related activity:

- **EPS Support Schemes** – financing and capacity-building for cooperatives.
- **Entrepreneurship & Productive Reactivation** – SME and inclusive-business support.
- **Community entrepreneurship programmes** via MIES.

ECOSYSTEM



Stakeholders

Non-governmental bodies:

- **IMPAQTO** – major impact hub offering incubation, acceleration, research.
- **CORPEI** – entrepreneurship and competitiveness support.

Sectoral networks:

- **Red de Economía Popular y Solidaria, FENOC**, NGO networks supporting grassroots innovation.

Support organisations:

- **IMPAQTO Labs, EPICO Guayaquil**, and university entrepreneurship centres (UASB, ESPOL, PUCE).



Support Initiatives

Common types: incubators, accelerators, community labs, university hubs.

Key examples:

- **IMPAQTO Accelerator** – early-stage support for impact ventures.
- **EPICO Innovation Hub** – municipal incubation and prototyping.
- University innovation centres for SI-related training.



Collaboration

Includes:

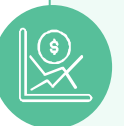
- Municipal innovation challenges.
- University–NGO partnerships for community development.
- Development-agency collaborations supporting inclusive business and climate innovation.



Events & Awards

- **Social Innovation Summit Ecuador** – national multi-stakeholder event.
- **Premios IMPAQTO** – awards for social innovation.
- **Ekos sustainability awards** – ESG/impact recognition.

FINANCE



Financing Schemes

No consolidated estimate. Key channels:

- **Public credit lines** (CFN, BanEcuador) for SMEs and cooperatives.
- **Impact investment** via IMPAQTO Capital and regional funds.
- **International development finance** (IDB Lab, UNDP, GEF) for inclusive/community innovation.
- **Corporate CSR/philanthropy** and **crowdfunding**.



Financing Inclusivity

Moderately inclusive; targeted groups: women-led enterprises, rural and Indigenous communities, youth, EPS organisations. Barriers include limited seed capital, urban concentration, administrative complexity.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

The term “social innovation” is used inconsistently, but related themes—entrepreneurship, sustainability, community development—appear regularly in media and innovation hubs.



Research

Academic research across:

- **UASB, FLACSO, ESPOL, PUCE** on social economy and innovation [5].
- Practitioner research from **IMPAQTO, Swisscontact, IDB Lab** supplements ecosystem insights.



Education & Human Capital

SI appears mainly within broader entrepreneurship, innovation and development curricula. Examples: university programmes (ESPOL, PUCE, UASB) and EPS/cooperative training by SEPS and NGOs. No SI-specific graduate statistics exist.

Entrepreneurship



67th
82 countries

Business Environment

EIU Business Environment Ranking (2024): ~67/82.

105^t
h / **132** countries

Innovation Capacity

~105/132 [9].

Global Innovation Index 2024



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

GEM: High entrepreneurial intent, moderate social entrepreneurship, structural constraints.

Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

High community solidarity; lower generalised trust (WVS).



Political participation

Low score (EIU Democracy Index).



Volunteering

Mid-to-low CAF ranking.

60th
180 countries

Sustainability

~60/180; moderate climate performance.

Environmental Performance Index 2024