



**Iceland, The Quick Facts**

- Country size:** 103 000 sq.km
- Population:** 338,000 (2017)  
10.6% are foreign-born
- Language:** Icelandic  
English is widely-spoken
- Capital:** Reykjavik
- Median Age:** 36.3
- Currency:** Icelandic Króna (ISK)
- Economy:** GDP Per Capita 73.092 USD/person (2017)  
Unemployment Rate 2.9% (2017)

More about the unique little island <http://iceland.is> .



**READ OUR EURAXESS countries in FOCUS:**

EURAXESS is supported by over 40 countries, of which we profile one in each of our quarterly EURAXESS LAC newsletters. In this edition, we zoom in on ICELAND.

Focuses on other EU countries are available [here](#).

So far, we featured the following countries:  
Luxembourg, Greece, Estonia, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Hungary and Spain.

# EURAXESS members in focus: ICELAND

Located in the North-Atlantic ocean close by the Arctic Circle, Iceland is very much a bridge between continents. It takes approximately five hours to fly from New York to Reykjavík, and three hours from London.

Iceland is a progressive, modern society that continuously ranks at the top of measurements for quality of life, such as the United Nations Human Development Index. Its economy is one of the most productive economies in the world, per-capita, and it is annually considered to be one of greenest countries on the planet, due in large parts to its vast renewable energy resources.

The Icelandic system of research and development is a multilevel system with a dispersed decision-making structure. It has a number of fully-fledged research institutions, essential funds and a strong force of well-trained scientists, and covers all major fields in science and technology. Icelandic scientists face a challenging task of maintaining the quality and range of research activities. Concentration of research in key areas is important in order to optimize resources.

## Icelandic S&T Policy and Strategy

The Science and Technology Policy Council is responsible for setting public policy in matters of science and technology in Iceland. It's role is to support scientific research, science education and technological development in Iceland so as to strengthen the foundations of the Icelandic culture and increase the competitiveness of the economy. The Science and Technology Policy Council operates pursuant to Act No 2/2003. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and its members include the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Innovation as well as 16 representatives nominated by different ministries and higher education institutions and by the social partners. In addition, the chair may appoint up to four other ministers to the Council. The Council sets the official science and technology policy for a three-year period.

The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) supports research, research studies, technical development and innovation in Iceland. RANNIS operates under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and cooperates closely with the Icelandic Science and Technology Policy Council providing professional assistance regarding the preparation and implementation of science and technology policy in Iceland. RANNIS administers competitive funds and strategic research programmes, coordinates and promotes Icelandic participation in collaborative international projects in science and technology and promotes public awareness of research and innovation in Iceland.

## Funding

THE ICELANDIC RESEARCH FUND (IRF) is an open competitive research fund that supports scholarly research and postgraduate research education in Iceland. To this end, the IRF supports clearly defined research projects of individuals, research groups, universities, research institutes and private enterprises. IRF shall award grants in accordance with the general emphases of the Science and Technology Policy Council and based on an expert assessment of the quality of research projects, the capability of the individuals carrying out the proposed research and their ability to devote time and effort to the project.

## RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

### [University of Iceland](#)

The University of Iceland is a research university and places great emphasis on quality in research. The university operates dozens of [research institutions and centre](#).

### [Reykjavik University](#)

Reykjavik University has a clear and progressive [research strategy](#).

### [University of Akureyri](#)

[Research](#) is one of the fundamental aspects of the University of Akureyri.

### [Bifrost University](#)

### [The Agricultural University of Iceland](#)

### [Iceland Academy of the Arts](#)

### [Holar University College](#)

## OTHER RESEARCH INSTITUTES

### [Landspítali - University Hospital](#)

### [Icelandic Institute of Natural History](#)

### [Innovation Center Iceland](#)

### [National Energy Authority of Iceland](#)

### [Nordvulk - The Nordic Volcanological Centre](#)

### [The Science Institute - University of Iceland](#)

### [Institute for Experimental Pathology of the University of Iceland](#)

### [Iceland Forest Service](#)

### [National Land Survey of Iceland](#)

The Technology Development Fund is a public, competitive fund that supports innovation and technology development projects. The role of the fund is to support research and development activities, which aim towards innovation in Icelandic industry and increased competitiveness of the Icelandic economy. The fund supports projects along the R&D&I value chain from applied research projects, development of start-up companies, to the first steps into marketing. The fund operates according to the policy of The Science and Technology Policy Council, which role is to promote scientific research and research training in the sciences and encourage technological progress in Iceland.

## Icelandic Research and Innovation institutions

**The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies** was established in 2006 with the merger of several Icelandic institutes in the field. The institute is located in Reykjavík and has the role of preserving and studying medieval Icelandic manuscripts and disseminating knowledge to the scientific community and public at large about the its research in Icelandic studies, history, langue and literature as well as preserve and augment the collections within its care.



**Matis ltd.** is an Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D institute founded in 2007. For years, Mátís has been considered a valuable partner in multiple, miscellaneous projects and has played a leading role in large international projects with some of the largest food and ingredient companies in the world. Mátís employs around 100 staff in offices, laboratories or Food Innovation Centres located in cities or towns around Iceland. Matis' turnover in 2014 was around \$11.3 million USD, of which approximately 35% comes from international cooperation.



**Iceland GeoSurvey** is a self-financing, state-owned, non-profit institution established in 2003. It is based on seven decades of continuous experience in the field of geothermal and hydropower research and development. During this period Iceland GeoSurvey has provided consulting, training, and scientific services to the Icelandic power industry and the Icelandic government, and to numerous foreign companies and governments all over the world. Although the focus is on geothermal exploration, development, and utilisation, Iceland GeoSurvey's experience covers many other geoscience-related fields as well, including groundwater studies, marine geology, and environmental monitoring.



**The Icelandic Meteorological Office** IMO is a governmental institution under the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources. The research focus of IMO is on weather and climate, atmospheric processes, glacier and avalanche studies, hydrological systems, earthquake and volcanic processes and geohazards. IMO also focuses on research in multi-parameter geophysical monitoring to develop more accurate forecasts of hazardous events. IMO has participated in several European and Nordic funded research projects, having the role of lead partner in many of them.



**Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI)** is a government institute under the auspices of the Ministry of Industries and Innovation. The institute employs around 190 staff, operates 2 research vessels and 10 branches around the country, including an aquaculture experimental station. MFRI is leading in marine and freshwater research in Icelandic territories and the arctic, providing advice on sustainable use



SNAPSHOT



**Bringing Knowledge of Geothermal Energy to El Salvador**

**Edwin Melara (El Salvador)**

Edwin Melara is a Geothermal Fluids Chemist and reservoir expert for LaGeo geothermal power plant in El Salvador. Edwin developed his expertise in the UN University Geothermal Training Programme in Iceland. The course is designed so you can learn skills from sampling and analysis to interpretation and evaluation as a reservoir expert. To support El Salvador's pursuit of green energy the United Nations Geothermal Training Programme in Iceland has trained generations of energy experts, providing them with cutting edge geothermal knowledge and skills ([source](#)).

and protection of the environment. The main research priorities are research on marine and freshwater ecosystems, sustainable exploitation of main stocks, ecosystem approach to fisheries management, research on fishing technology and seafloor and habitat mapping. MFRI is highly regarded in the scientific community and is therefore a valuable research partner, active at an international level with a strong infrastructure and high quality equipment. MFRI is an appealing work place with progressive human resources policy to strengthen the institute's competitiveness and an effective gender equality policy.

## Study in Iceland

Study in Iceland is a service housed within the Icelandic Center for Research. The new website, <http://study.iceland.is>, was launched in 2017 brings together information and resources for international students interested at studying at one of Iceland's seven universities. The website is run in collaboration with Íslandsstofa (Promote Iceland) and provides information on university education, Icelandic as a foreign language, summer schools, life in Iceland, and a practical guide for applicants and foreign students. Study in Iceland also provides advice and signposting to services through e-mail or phone for interested parties.



## Important information for incoming researchers: [EURAXESS Iceland](#)

The Icelandic Centre for Research is the coordinator of EURAXESS in Iceland and the EURAXESS Bridgehead organisation. RANNIS coordinates and promotes Icelandic participation in international cooperation in science, education and culture and interacts with corresponding agencies and research councils in other countries and provides assistance to incoming researchers with advice on daily life and formalities of moving to Iceland. The EURAXESS network in Iceland is quite small as it consists of three members: in addition to RANNIS the University of Iceland and the University of Reykjavik are established as EURAXESS contact points.



<https://www.euraxess.is/>