

Northeast Iceland development strategy 2020-2024

When preparing the Northeast Iceland development strategy (Sóknaráætlun Norðurlands eystra) 2020 – 2024, several policies and plans were considered, such as The Strategic Regional Plan, the government's cultural and environmental policies and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals to name a few. The strategy was prepared in consultation with the residents of the area, elected representatives as well as the management and employees of the Association of Municipalities in Northeast Iceland (SSNE).

The Northeast development strategy marks the future vision for the region in 2024 with emphasis on three distinct pillars:



Business Development and Innovation

Strong infrastructure, good transport and an innovative, sustainable economy



Culture

Increased importance of multiculturalism and art studies

Increased job opportunities in arts



Environment

Increased environmental awareness in a socially responsible region

Increased happiness of the regions' inhabitants is the overarching long-term goal



Business development and innovation

GOALS AND EXAMPLES OF TACTICS

- **Improve transport within the region as well as to the region** e.g. further development of the Loftbrú project that offers subsidized airfares to Reykjavik for citizens in rural Iceland. Develop a transport policy for the region. Establish regular international flights to the Northeast region.
- **Strengthen the infrastructure of the region** e.g. ensure sufficient quantity and stability of electricity. Increase the share of those living with the three-phase electrical connection to 90%. Increase the share of those who have a fiber optic connection to 100%. Define Akureyri as an urban city.
- **Protect interests of the most rural communities in the Northeast** e.g., participation in specific projects of strategic regional plan (C.1 in SB). Participation in the project of Iceland's Regional Development Institute - Fragile communities. Ensure a positive and ongoing coverage of the social life and economy of the smaller communities.
- **Promote a diverse economy and promote innovation. Special emphasis is placed on food tech, welfare technology, primary industries, tourism and the Arctic** e.g. increase awareness and education about the public grant system. Increase the grant application assistance offered by SSNE. Enhance accessibility and diversity of education at all school levels - emphasis on art, technology and vocational training. Establishment and operation of the Welfare Technology Center. Define the region for increased and better energy efficiency with special emphasis on geothermal energy. Contribute to the installation of cluster centers in the region. Develop a common vision for the area in employment and innovation. Establish Akureyri as the center for Arctic activities in the country.

Culture

GOALS AND EXAMPLES OF TACTICS

- **Ensure diversity of cultural activities with an emphasis on accessibility of diverse groups to culture and cultural heritage**, e.g. promote cultural tourism, especially during off-season. Increase visibility and opportunities for diverse groups in cultural activities. Promote theme-related festivals in the area (multicultural festivals, food festivals, craft festivals, etc.). Review and rewrite SSNE's multicultural policy. Strengthen and establish co-operation with cultural institutions and festivals from other parts of the country.
- **Strengthen cooperation between cultural institutions and increase promotion and marketing of the cultural activities**, e.g. provide professional assistance to museums. Use innovative ways to introduce and share the cultural heritage of the area. Support project-based collaboration between various cultural institutions. Strengthen Arctic collaboration in the field of culture and arts.
- **Increase the employment opportunities for artists in the area**, e.g. establish domestic and foreign collaboration projects. Support projects that incorporate new ideas in culture and arts. Define the regional role of cultural institutions in rural areas.
- **Support artistic creation**, e.g. promote and support cultural events for children and young people. Strengthen cultural collaboration between colleges in the Northeast. Promote and support grassroot initiative in arts. Increase art courses and art workshops in the area.



Environment



GOALS AND EXAMPLES OF TACTICS

- **Establish future and overall vision of the region in environmental matters**, e.g. collaborate on a comprehensive regional plan. Increase cooperation with farmers and landowners. Develop a strategy for building a circular economy. Map potential energy sources and develop policies for their utilization.
- **Increase local awareness about environmental and consumption issues**, e.g. encourage increased awareness of regional production. Promote energy exchange in transport and encourage changed travel habits. Make an educational plan for environmental and climate issues that municipalities and other stakeholders can utilize. Make a subpage on the SSNE website that links to useful content.
- **Contribute to Iceland's obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions**, e.g. assess the region's CO₂ emissions. Develop an action plan reduce CO₂ emission. Increase food production in the area. Shorten transport routes for consumer goods.
- **Meet the goals set out in the Iceland's plan regarding waste treatment**, e.g. produce a feasibility study for a bioenergy plant. Coordinate waste sorting. Significantly reduce landfills and reduce waste in the region. Encourage innovation in waste utilization and increase value creation by participating in incubation programs.
- **Ensure that the distribution of funds in the region is in line with environmental objectives**, e.g. prioritize grant applications for projects that support the environmental objectives. Establish an environmental Council of Specialists.