

A brief overview on regional studies in Iceland:

Research which can be termed as regional studies, has been carried out in a few institutes in Iceland. These are primarily three of the universities and to a smaller degree government institutes. It appears that universities outside the capital region in Iceland are more active in this field. There is more interest in linking diverse research projects with the field of regional studies. There appears to be less incentive in this sense in universities in the capital region which has, depending on definition, 63-75% of the total population. Furthermore there are important actors enabling research in this field of study as being major funders of research. These are primarily government institutes or research funds, municipalities or associations of municipalities. Many international research projects in the field have been carried out under the umbrella of the Nordic Council (<http://www.norden.org/en>) and some under the Northern Periphery Programme (<http://www.northernperiphery.net/>) and ESPON.

University of Akureyri was founded in Akureyri north Iceland in 1987 and is operated by the state. The university has built a reputation for academic excellence, good industrial relations and strength in specific fields of study such as fisheries, renewable energy and regional studies. Being located in the capital of north Iceland, Akureyri, the university has been instrumental in the region's economic growth and is central in the region's future planning as a knowledge based society. The university is divided into a Faculty of Business and Science, a Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and a Faculty of Health Sciences. The number of students is around 1450 and staff members are around 180. Since the establishment of the university there has been interest in regional studies among its academics. This interest has probably been growing during the past few years. The University of Akureyri Research Centre (<http://www.rha.is>) has participated in diverse projects within the field of regional studies. The University of Akureyri takes part in the ESPON programme. Gretar Thor Eyporsson (gretar@unak.is), a professor at the university, is its national ESPON Contact Point (ECP). <http://english.unak.is/>

University of Iceland was established in 1911 and is operated by the state. The university is structured into five academic schools, and 25 faculties. The university offers a diverse range of academic programmes on all levels. It is the only university in Iceland offering undergraduate and graduate studies in all the main disciplines. The university is an internationally renowned research university. The university operates around 40 research institutes, and research-based graduate studies are offered in several disciplines. Some of these institutes have been involved in research in the field of regional studies, especially The Institute of Economic Studies (<http://www.ioes.hi.is/>) and The Social Science Research Institute (<http://www.fel.hi.is/>) The number of students is currently around 15,000. <http://hi.is/en>

Bifröst University was founded in 1918. Originally a business school, Bifröst began to offer degrees in law in 2002 and in social science in 2005. Bifröst is a private, self-governing, non-profit institution which receives around 40% of its income from the Icelandic state. The Bifröst campus is 110 km from the centre of Reykjavík in a rural environment, roughly 90 minutes' driving distance from the capital. The University operates The Bifröst University Research Institute that has taken on projects within the field of regional studies. <http://bifrost.is/english/>

Institute for Regional Development in Iceland. The Institute of Regional Development in Iceland is run by the Icelandic state under the authority of the Minister of Industry. The institute's main

objective is to strengthen settlement and economic activity in regions outside the capital region. The institute is located in Sauðárkókur, a town of 2.600 in Iceland. The Institute itself has carried out diverse studies on regional issues and also in cooperation with universities.

<http://byggdastofnun.is/forsida/>