

Ministry
of Education,
Science and Culture
in Iceland



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The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture originates from the first Office of the Government Offices which was established in the year 1904. In 1917 educational matters fell under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs. In 1947 it was decided to establish a Ministry of Education, albeit, under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office and with the same staff. These ministries were operated under the same controlling body until 1969.

The role of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, which was outlined in the Regulations on Government Offices of 1969, changed only slightly until the year 2004 when new Regulations on Government Offices were adopted as the Icelanders celebrated the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Government Offices. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for matters concerning:

- Educational institutions and instruction at the pre-school, compulsory, upper secondary and higher education levels in addition to special schools that do not fall under the control of other ministries.

- Lifelong learning, general education matters and the publication of educational materials
- Student loans and grants
- Research and scientific work that does not fall under other ministries
- Museums and historical artefacts
- The arts, support for the arts and their promotion domestically and internationally
- Copyright issues
- The Icelandic language, place names
- Broadcasting and other media
- Sports and youth projects

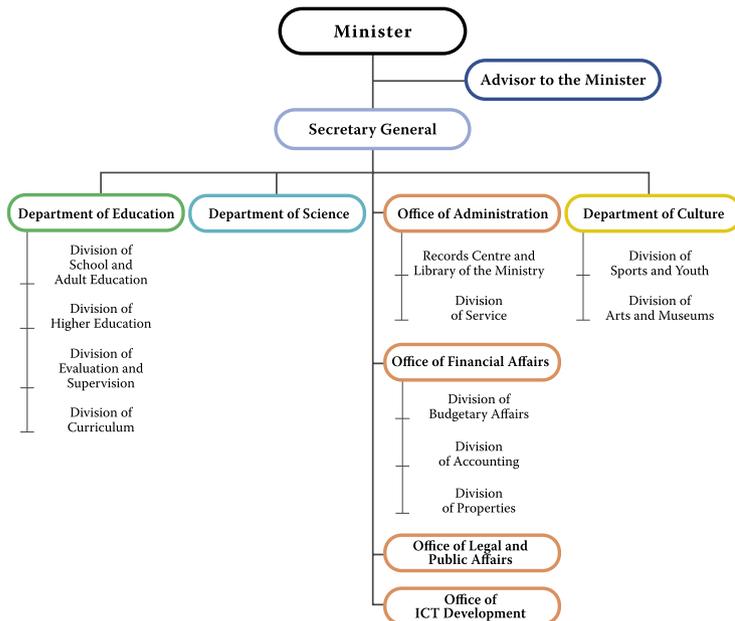
There are 53 institutions and about 230 committees and councils working under the auspices of the Ministry.

The Ministry has just over 70 employees. The Permanent Secretary directs the Ministry under the Minister's ultimate authority.



LARÁÐUNEYTIÐ

ORGANISATION CHART



Expenditures in Education and Culture

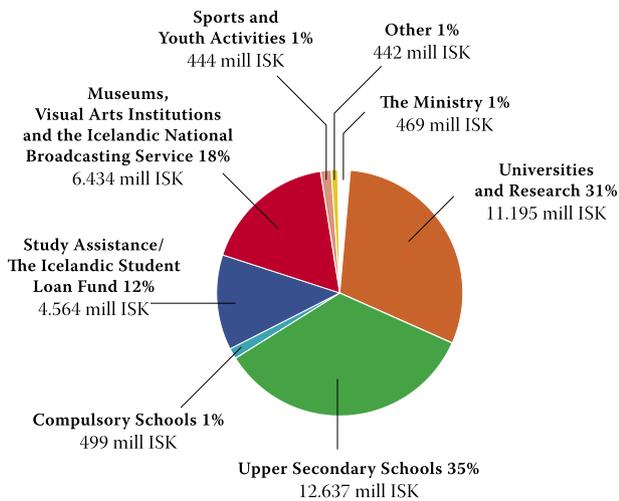
The total expenditure of the Icelandic State as per the 2005 national budget is ISK 296.4 billion. Of this, over ISK 36 billion has been allocated to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, or some 12,2%.

Education is by far the Ministry's greatest cost factor, accounting for some 80% of the Ministry's total expenditure, or ISK 28.5 billion, and 9,7% of the total expenditure by the State. The education category incorporates higher education and research, upper secondary schools, compulsory schools and the Icelandic Student Loan Fund.

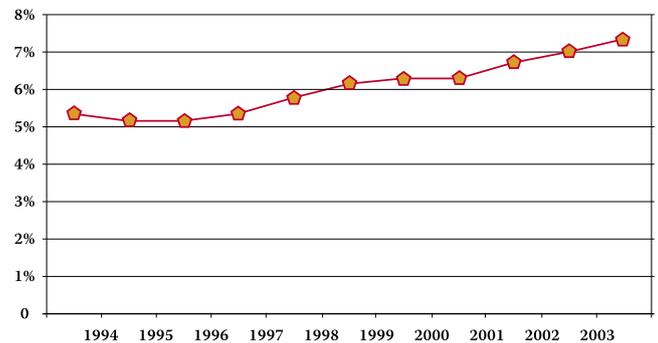
Expenditures in cultural affairs as per the national budget 2005 are set at ISK 6.3 billion, or just under 17,5% of the Ministry's total expenditures. The cultural affairs category incorporates allocations to the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service, as well as various museums and visual art institutions. Expenditures in sports and youth activities, as well as international relations, account for ISK 650 million, or 1,8% of the Ministry's total expenditures.



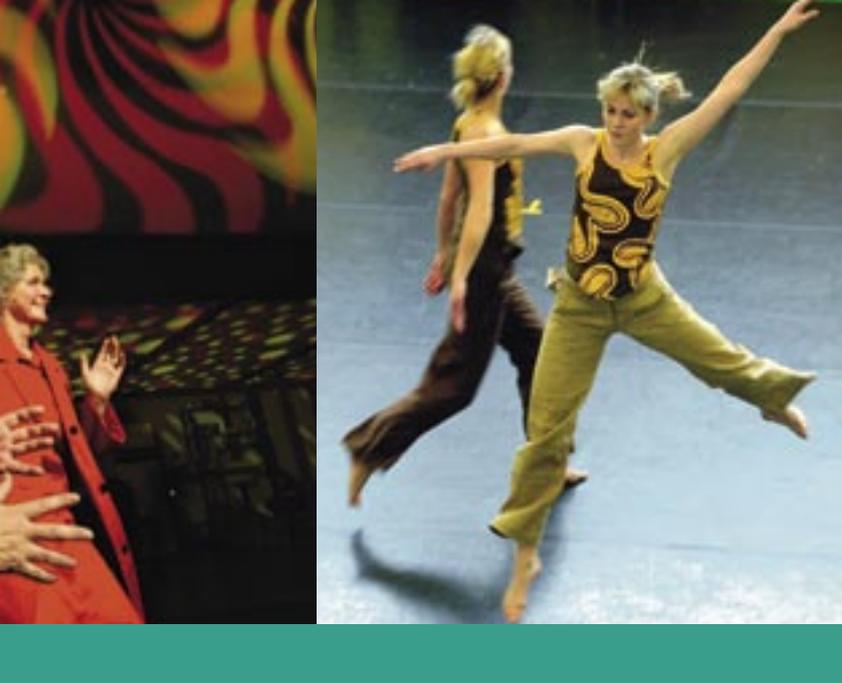
THE NATIONAL BUDGET 2005 IN ISK MILLION, AND RELATIVE DIVISION BETWEEN POLICY AREAS



PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT 1991-2002



The numbers above are based on information from Statistics Iceland. The numbers for 2003 represent interim numbers. According to an evaluation by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, expenses in relation to educational matters are underestimated as set out in the older figures of Statistics Iceland; and the greatest part of the underestimation lies in expenses to universities. Expenses in relation to the pre-school level have to date not been part of the educational expenses.



CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture oversees administration and sets policy with regard to cultural affairs in Iceland. This incorporates matters pertaining to the arts, national cultural heritage, media and sport, and youth programmes.

The Arts, Museums and other Cultural Affairs

The role of the State in culture may be said to be three-fold. Firstly, the administration and running of institutions; secondly, administering funds to support cultural affairs; and thirdly, the support of various activities and projects, either as set forth by law or through grants on the basis of financial allocations in the national budget for each year. Funds aimed at supporting art and cultural related activities are allocated specifically to project grants except in the cases of art funds and the salary fund that provide for salaries for non-fiction writers. The activities of amateur associations and professional associations receive financial support from the national budget.

Cultural institutions operate either in the field of art, media, national cultural heritage or museums. Cultural institutions also operate within the academic sector.

Funds Related to Cultural Affairs

- *The Museum Fund* · *The Building Protection Fund*
- *The Archaeology Fund* · *Art Funds for Artists* · *The Salary Fund for Non-Fiction Writers* · *The Children's Cultural Fund*
- *The Translation Fund* · *The Cultural Fund* · *The Community Centres' Cultural Fund* · *The Icelandic Film Fund*
- *The Music Fund* · *The Decorative Arts Fund* · *The Literature Promotion Fund* · *The Youth Fund* · *The Sports Fund*

Cultural Institutions

- *The National Theatre of Iceland* · *The Iceland Dance Company*
- *The Iceland Symphony Orchestra* · *The Icelandic Film Centre* · *The Icelandic Board of Film Classification* · *The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service* · *National Gallery of Iceland* · *The Einar Jónsson Museum* · *The National Film Archive of Iceland* · *The National Museum of Iceland* · *The Archaeological Heritage Agency of Iceland* · *The Building Protection Committee* · *The Icelandic Language Institute* · *The Library for the Blind* · *The National Archives*
- *The National and University Library* · *University of Iceland* · *Institute of Lexicography* · *The Árni Magnússon Institute*
- *The Sigurður Nordal Institute* · *The Place-Name Institute*



The Ministry is also responsible for agreements with cultural institutions and various local municipalities, where State expenditures for cultural affairs are channelled into projects specified in the agreements or into cultural affairs in general. An example of this is the State's agreement with The Icelandic Opera Company and various cultural agreements with different local municipalities.

To improve facilities for the arts and culture in Iceland, the Government has allocated funding for the construction of cultural centres in five different locations throughout the country: Akureyri, Ísafjörður, Sauðárkrúkur, East Iceland and the Westman Islands. The role of these cultural centres has been defined in collaboration with the relevant municipality. Their role is to serve their respective regions in the cultural field and shall be constructed in such a way as to provide good facilities for the performing arts, as well as visual art and museum work.

Broadcasting

The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service is an independent institution owned by the State. Its role is to broadcast year-round two radio stations and one television station throughout Iceland and to the surrounding oceanic regions. The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service has extensive responsibilities with regard to freedom of expression, safeguarding Icelandic culture and the Icelandic language, and cultural diversity.

The Broadcasting Rights Committee issues broadcast licences and ensures that broadcast legislation is adhered to. In 2005

there were 26 radio stations and 13 television stations that held so-called long-term broadcasting licences.

Copyright Issues

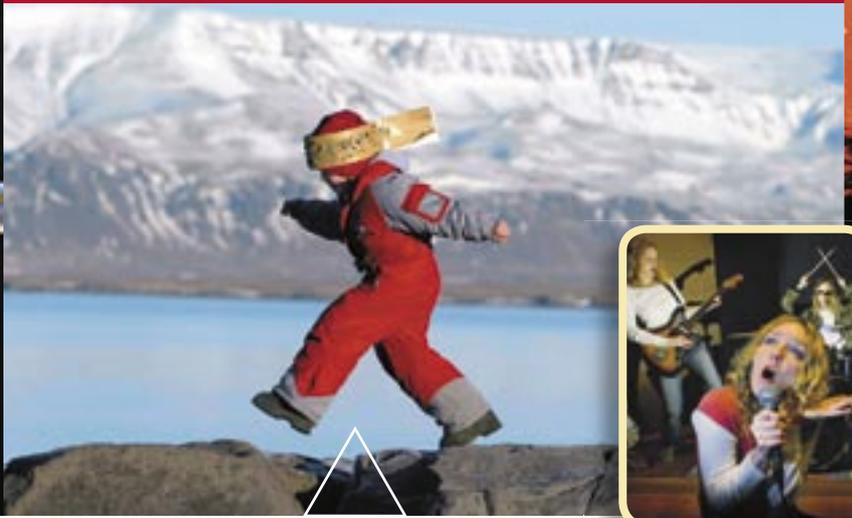
The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture administers matters pertaining to copyright. The Ministry awards recognition to copyright holders' associations and approves their resolutions and royalty fees in relation to the use of their work and material that falls within the scope of copyright laws.

Iceland is party to a number of international conventions on intellectual property issues pertaining to authors, performers, producers and broadcasters. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture represents Iceland at such conventions on behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Sports and Youth Activities

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture administers sports and youth activities to the extent that the State gets involved in those. In this regard the Ministry collects information on sports culture in Iceland and the facilities available, and supports research in the field. The main aim of the State with regard to sports culture is to facilitate the ability of all Icelanders to practice sports. In cooperating with local municipalities regarding organised sports, the State takes into account the value of sports in child development, as well as health and prevention factors.

The Sports Committee, appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, advises the Ministry in matters



EDUCATION

The educational system in Iceland is administered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The Ministry prepares educational policy, oversees its implementation, and is responsible for educational matters at all educational levels. The Ministry issues the national curricula for pre-school, compulsory and upper secondary levels and oversees evaluation and supervision in education at all levels.

A fundamental principle of the Icelandic educational system is that everyone should have equal opportunities to acquire an education, irrespective of sex, economic status, residential location, religion, possible handicap, and cultural or social background.

Levels of Education

Pre-School Level. Pre-school is the first educational level and is intended for children below the compulsory age for education. Parents are free to decide whether their children attend pre-school. In 2003 there were 4.722 children aged 0-2 and 11.963 children aged 3-5 attending the 267 pre-schools that are operated in Iceland.

Compulsory Level. Children and adolescents aged 6-16 must by law attend 10 years of compulsory education. The length of the school year is nine months. Pupils at this level numbered 44.809 in 2003, and that year there were 187 compulsory schools in Iceland.

Upper Secondary Level. All those who have completed their compulsory education or equivalent have the right to study at the upper secondary level. This generally incorporates the age group 16–20. To meet students' diverse needs, some 100 branches of study are offered at the upper secondary level. Of those, there

are 87 vocational branches of study that vary in organisation and length. The duration of study can be from one to ten semesters. All branches of study offer pathways to further education. Some upper secondary schools provide only general education while others provide both vocational and general education. There are 39 upper secondary schools in Iceland that are variously termed comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools, technical colleges and vocational colleges. The length of the school year is nine months. In 2003 there were 21.910 students at this level.

Higher Education Level. Students who commence studying at this level must have completed a matriculation examination, or equivalent. Eight institutions in Iceland offer study towards a university degree. They are: The University of Iceland, The University of Akureyri, The Iceland University of Education, The Bifröst School of Business, Reykjavik University and The Icelandic Academy for the Arts. These institutions operate on the basis of the Universities Act, while the Hvanneyri Agricultural University and the Hólar University College work according to the Agricultural Education Act and are under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture. In 2003 there were 15.357 students studying at the higher education level.

Music Schools. There are some 90 music schools in Iceland, offering tuition to students ranging from pre-school age to adults.

Lifelong Learning. The types of lifelong learning opportunities offered are highly diverse. Lifelong learning takes place in upper secondary schools and higher education institutions, many of which offer distance-learning programmes. Upper secondary schools operate evening classes and many



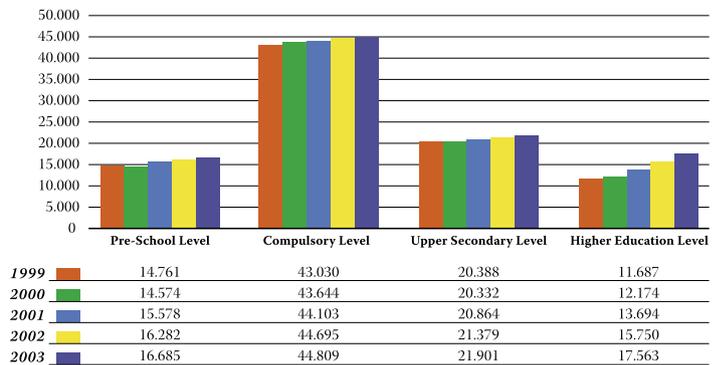
municipalities provide funding for lifelong learning courses. Lifelong learning is also provided by private schools, companies and community organisations. Nine lifelong learning centres are operated outside the capital area, offering vocational courses and distance learning at the higher education and upper secondary levels, in cooperation with schools and the economic sector.

Student Numbers

From 1999-2003 there was relatively little change in student numbers in compulsory and upper secondary schools, or 4% in compulsory schools and 7,4% in upper secondary schools. At the pre-school level, the number of children rose by 13% during the same period. By far the greatest rise in student numbers was at the higher education level, or 50%. The main reason for this substantial boost is added diversity in university-level education, with an increase in the number of institutions at this level and added opportunities for distance learning. Other factors include changes in working norms, increased emphasis on know-how and specialisation by the economic sector and individuals in general. In addition, a broader age group than before is now enrolled in higher education programmes.

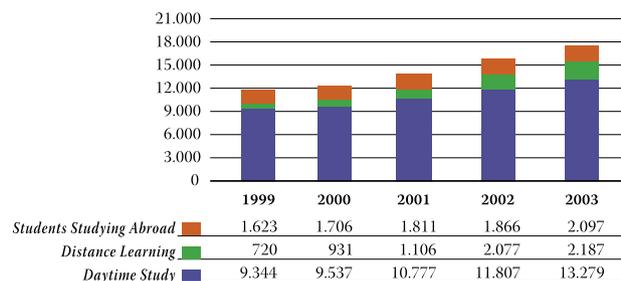
The rise in student numbers in higher education varies according to whether it applies to daytime study, distance learning, or students studying abroad. The most substantial rise, or 203,7%, has been in distance learning, although it should be noted that a large portion of that figure applies to part-time study. The number of students enrolled in daytime study has risen by 42,0%, and students studying abroad by 29,2%.

STUDENT NUMBERS AT ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS
1999-2003



Source: Statistics Iceland

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PROGRAMMES
AT THE HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL 1999-2003



Source: Statistics Iceland



Educational Aims

The primary aims of pre-school include the provision of care and a healthy environment in which children can grow, safe playing conditions, the possibility for the child to grow and develop as part of a group under the direction of a pre-school teacher, cooperation with the child's home environment to strengthen the child's all-round development in accordance with his or her individuality and needs, and to nurture children psychologically and physically so that they may enjoy their childhood.

The role of compulsory schools is to cooperate with the students' home environment and to provide a foundation for living and working in an ever-changing democratic society, in addition to facilitating their all-round development. The working culture of schools should be based on tolerance, Christian morals and democratic cooperation. The schools shall provide students with the opportunity to increase their knowledge and teach them how to apply working practices that support their endeavours in the process of education and growth. The schools should also create a foundation for independent thought and train students in their development of interpersonal skills.

The role of upper secondary schools is to encourage the overall development of students in order to prepare them for active participation in a democratic society, participation in the labour market and further studies.

The primary role of universities is to educate students so that they have, among other things, the ability to work independently on scientific projects, to be innovative and to operate in the environment of art. This is aimed at their participation in the society in various activities that demand higher educational skills.

Curricula

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture issues national curriculum guidelines for pre-schools, compulsory schools,

upper secondary schools and music schools. The current national curriculum guidelines lay the educational foundation for the information and technological society of the 21st century. Schools at all educational levels form their school working guide based on the national curricula, in which the main policy of the school and an operating plan on how to reach the issued aims are presented.

The executive management of each higher education institution makes decisions regarding methods of instruction, study, evaluation and research.

Evaluation and Monitoring in the Educational System

According to the law, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the evaluation and supervision of education at all levels.

With increased decentralisation within the educational system, educational institutions have been given more obligations and increased responsibility for their own internal evaluation regarding curricula, instruction and other operations. Consequently, the Ministry is required to monitor activities more closely than before. Educational institutions at the pre-school, compulsory and upper secondary levels shall, according to laws and regulations, implement methods for their own internal evaluation. At five-year intervals an outside party shall carry out an assessment of the compulsory and upper secondary schools' internal evaluation methods. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is also to evaluate individual aspects of school operations, in view of the aims put forth in the national and school curricula, among other things.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture monitors the quality of education provided by higher education institutions and the ways in which each institution fulfils its responsibilities with regard to its own internal evaluation. The Ministry takes the initiative when it comes to external evaluation.



Operation of Educational Institutions

The vast majority of educational institutions are operated by the public sector, although private schools receive public funding provided they fulfil specific requirements.

Pre-school operations and the construction of such facilities are the responsibility of local municipalities and at their expense. They take the initiative in ensuring children a place in pre-schools. Parents pay a fee for their children's attendance.

Since 1996, local municipalities have been responsible for the operations of compulsory schools and their premises. A school board working in each municipality ensures that children of legal school age receive instruction as stipulated by law.

Operational costs of upper secondary schools are covered by the State budget, while construction and initial expenses for premises are divided between the State and the local municipalities at a ratio of 60 to 40. Local municipalities are not responsible for the operations of upper secondary schools, but nominate two representatives on their school boards.

State-funded higher education institutions are independent bodies under the auspices of the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. Higher education institutions may be founded through free enterprise pending authorisation by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. These are private non-profit institutions that operate in accordance with a charter and teaching agreement with the Ministry. Such institutions charge tuition fees.

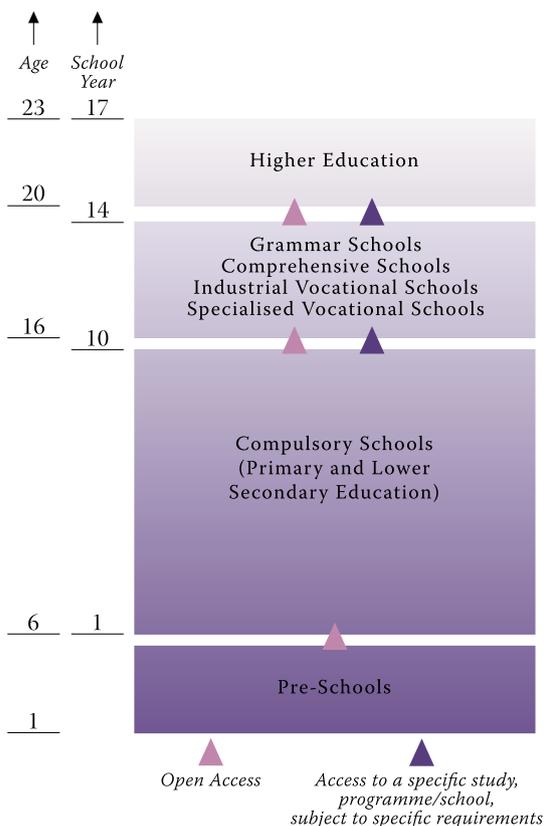
Local municipalities are responsible for the operations of most music schools. Local municipalities also provide funding for private music schools. The State covers costs for upper secondary school students enrolled in music training that may be credited towards a degree.

Student Loans

Students at the higher education level and those enrolled in vocational education and training at the upper secondary level are eligible for student loans. The role of the Student Loan Fund is to ensure equal opportunities in education, regardless of financial status. The student loans are intended to cover the cost of education and living expenses for the duration of the study term.

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

The Icelandic School System





SCIENCE

The government's policy in the fields of science and technology is decided by the Council for Science and Technology for three years at a time. The role of the Council is to boost scientific research, research training and technological development in Iceland, so as to strengthen the foundations of Icelandic culture and increase the competitiveness of the economy. Its deliberation in each of those two fields is prepared, respectively, by a scientific committee appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture and a technological committee appointed by the Minister of Industry.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture administers the preparation and implementation of the scientific and technological policy issued by the Council for Science and Technology. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes three other Ministers and 14 representatives of the scientific community and the economic sector.

The Icelandic Centre for Research, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, provides services to the competitive support funds earmarked for research and technological development, and supplies information on science and technological matters in Iceland.

The Ministry oversees international cooperation in scientific research and holds primary responsibility in negotiating agreements pertaining to such cooperation.

Research

Research is conducted under the auspices of higher education institutions, public research institutions, private non-profit institutions and companies, and by self-employed individuals. In 2001, Iceland allocated some 3% of the Gross Domestic Product towards research and development, which is the goal that the European Union aims to reach by 2010.

Some 2.900 man-years of work by 5.200 individuals are carried out in research and development in Iceland. Just fewer than 40% of those individuals are women.

The first chart illustrates the development of expenses for research and development by various entities over the past 33 years. Just over 1/3 of all research is believed to be performed by the public sector and just under 2/3 by companies and other individuals. The second chart illustrates this development in relation to Iceland's main competing countries. The third chart reveals the budget allocations for research and development by national objectives.



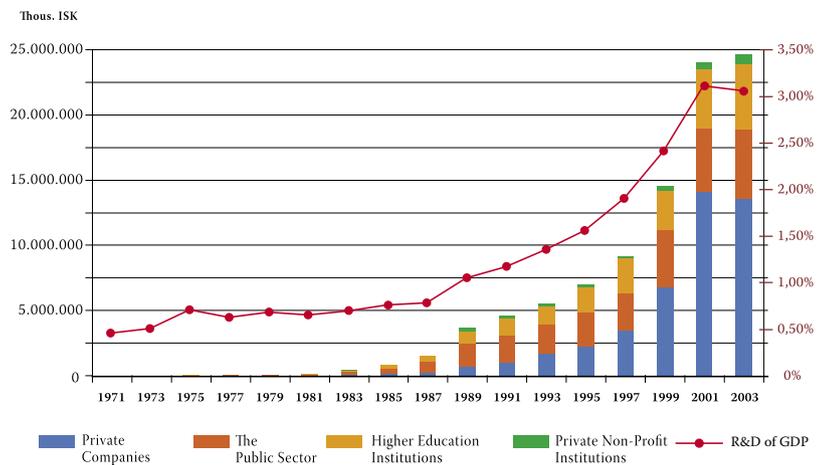
EXPENSES IN RELATION TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BY VARIOUS ENTITIES, AS VALUED IN 2003, AND THE PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF GDP

Scientific and Technological Policy

In December 2003, the Council for Science and Technology approved the primary aspects of the scientific and technological policy to the end of the current governmental term in 2007. The policy incorporates the following:

- The strengthening of funds supporting research and the more than doubling of their disposable income to 2007, which at that time will total ISK 1.700 million
- Strengthening academic research at the higher education level through increased competition and demands for quality
- The re-definition of the role of public research institutions and relations with the country's higher education institutions.

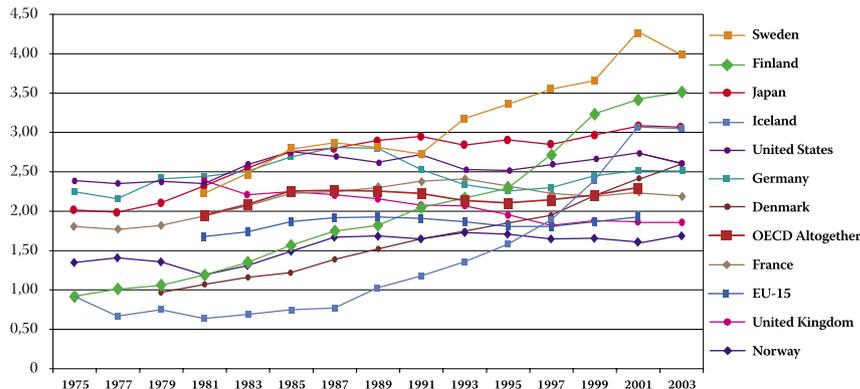
Iceland's energetic participation in international research cooperation is also emphasised, as is the furthering of education in the research field in Iceland.



Source: The Icelandic Centre for Research



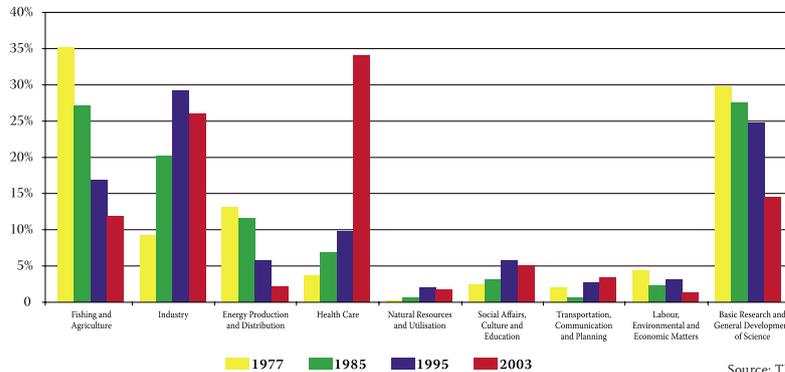
PROPORTION OF EXPENSES IN RELATION TO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT FOR SPECIFIC OECD COUNTRIES FOR 1975-2003



Source: The Icelandic Centre for Research and OECD



THE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BY NATIONAL OBJECTIVES FROM 1977-2003



Source: The Icelandic Centre for Research



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Nordic Cooperation

Extensive cooperation in culture, education and science takes place within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture oversees this cooperation on Iceland's behalf.

Cooperation within the European Economic Area (EEA)

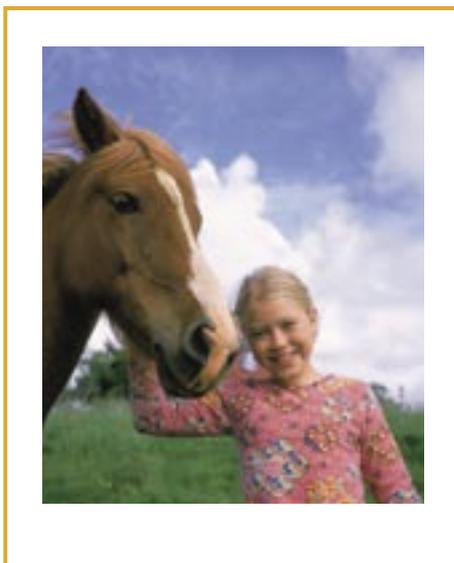
On the basis of the EEA agreement, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture directs Iceland's participation in the European Union's programmes in the fields of culture, education, research and development, as well as sports and youth programmes. The most extensive are the research and development framework programme, the Socrates and da Vinci educational programmes, the film programme MEDIA, the cultural programme CULTURE 2000 and the youth programme YOUTH. The Ministry also participates in specialist working groups under the auspices of the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) on copyright issues.

Other Foreign Cooperation

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is involved in cooperation within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the West-Nordic Parliamentarians' Council.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is in charge of preparations when the Icelandic government hosts cultural events abroad.

Each year, the Ministry offers numerous grants to individuals and groups to support cultural promotion abroad. There are also several funds that give grants to support the promotion of Icelandic culture internationally.



Ministry of Education, Science and Culture