

# Fjarðabyggð

INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT 2021



FJARÐABYGGÐ



AUSTURBRÚ

## About the infrastructure report

Austurbrú created the Fjarðabyggð infrastructure report 2021 for Fjarðabyggð.

Austurbrú is the first institution of its kind in Iceland. Its goal is to simplify administration, to provide a platform for collaboration and integration and to advocate in the interest of East Iceland's inhabitants.

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Fog in Reyðarfjörður  
Photo: Esther Ósp Gunnarsdóttir



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# GREETINGS



Jón Björn Hákonarson  
Mayor of Fjarðabyggð

*We have showed in practice that we warmly welcome new inhabitants and companies, as well as opportunities for innovation.*

The disposition for growth is built into our community. The municipality Fjarðabyggð, and the communities within it, benefit from having recently undergone great changes due to developments in heavy industry, changes that had few, if any, precedents in Icelandic economic history. During those times, inhabitants, companies and institutions showed exceptional adaptability and solidarity.

Society still benefits from that experience, and we have showed in practice that we warmly welcome new inhabitants and companies, as well as opportunities for innovation. In addition, the municipality offers quality services well comparable on the national level. Since Fjarðabyggð was founded, a family-friendly policy has been followed that, for instance, is evident in that taxes involving families are among the lowest in the country.

Infrastructure development has always been important for the inhabitants of the area. Service levels are higher than usual in communities of similar size abroad, and the construction of two new tunnels after the turn of the century

resulted in a revolution in transportation.

The municipality's main tasks are economic development and further creation of jobs. We want to create an excellent setting for the economic life within the municipality and collaborate with enterprises that want to start their business here, as well as strengthen what already is.

We know that good jobs are the prerequisite for domiciles for residents and the main reason for people deciding to move to us, but for people to stay longer, the community needs to meet all the diverse needs and demands of modern-day people.

This infrastructure report, that we have created in collaboration with Austurbrú, is kind of a social description that hopefully paints a good picture of a dynamic community that has every potential to grow and prosper in the future.

A strong economy and high level of employment characterise Fjarðabyggð. Within the municipality, one can find prosperous companies in the fishing, service and heavy industries that together create enormous foreign exchange earnings for the national economy.

These base industries are currently undergoing great changes. With increased fish farming and technological

advances within fish processing, numerous ways for further development will arise, resulting in opportunities for highly educated people to seize. Recent growth in other industries has also been considerable. The tourism sector is getting stronger, and with Fjarðabyggð growing to the south, agriculture will play a bigger part in the municipality's economy than before.

## Iceland

Iceland is an island in the North Atlantic Ocean, situated between Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Norway. Its size is approximately 103,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the second largest island in Europe after Britain and the 18th largest in the world. Iceland has a population of around 370,000 people, half of them living in the capital Reykjavík and its surroundings.

Iceland is a democracy with a president, but Alþingi, the parliament, is the country's supreme institution. Iceland is not a member of the EU but participates in the European Economic Area in accordance with the EEA Agreement. Iceland is a member of NATO.

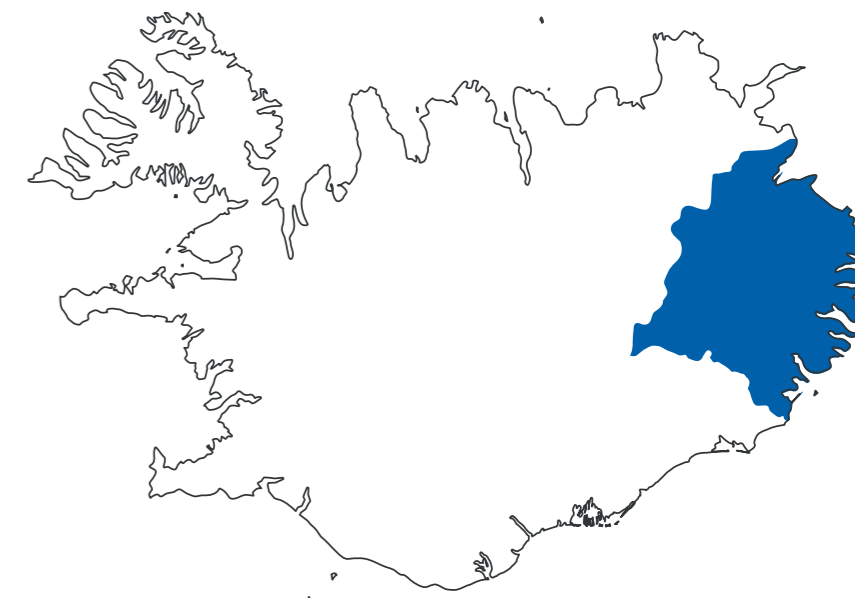
Fish and other marine products are the most important sources of revenue for Icelanders. Next comes the export of aluminium and ferro alloys. Recently, economic industries such as biotechnology, software and tourism in Iceland have been growing.

## East Iceland

East Iceland covers the area from Bakkafjörður in the north to Krossnes in the south and has four municipalities: Fjarðabyggð, Múlaþing, Fljótsdalshreppur and Vopnafjarðarhreppur. The municipalities cover almost 16 thousand square kilometres, with a population of 10,000.

Some of the more important premises of habitation in East Iceland, due to the generous fishing grounds outside the east coast, are fishing, fishing industry, aluminium production and other harbour-related activities. Despite being relatively sparsely populated, the economic life in the region is thriving, many flourishing companies have operated in East Iceland for decades and overall, unemployment has been low the last few years and decades.

Some of the largest companies active in the fishing industry in Iceland operate in the region, and it also has the largest aluminium plant and power plant in Iceland, resulting in jobs for highly technically skilled and educated people.



# Fjarðabyggð

High mountains and deep fjords characterise Fjarðabyggð. It has seven coastal villages. From north to south are Mjóifjörður, with one of Iceland's smallest settlements; then Neskaupstaður in Norðfjörður, the largest town in Fjarðabyggð; next comes Eskifjörður; then Reyðarfjörður, Fáskrúðsfjörður and Stöðvarfjörður. Breiðdalsvík is the most southern village of Fjarðabyggð. Inhabitants number approximately 5,100.

## Diverse job opportunities

Fjarðabyggð is a multinucleate community where diverse economic activities and good transportation able its inhabitants to seek employment within the municipality. A survey for the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration in 2016 showed that a little less than 60% of the respondents were willing to commute 30 minutes or longer for the right work opportunity. A large number of inhabitants living in the middle zone of East Iceland commute between towns for work, and many companies and institu-

tions service all East Iceland. For years, the employment level in Fjarðabyggð has been high, as has employee compensation per capita. Unemployment levels have been among the lowest in Iceland. Múlaþing municipality is Fjarðabyggð's neighbour; the largest town there is Egilsstaðir. The distance from Reyðarfjörður through road no. 1 is 34 km, which makes the area even bigger vocationally. A domestic and international airport is within a 30-minute driving distance from Reyðarfjörður. Fjarðabyggð offers companies, entrepreneurs and individuals good facilities and conditions in a powerful community in proximity to great natural resources.

## Proximity to natural recourses

The ocean's resources are close by, and Fjarðabyggð has good harbour facilities for fishery, commercial transport and cruise ships. The industrial production and fishing industry companies are modern, technologically advanced and follow



Oddsskarð Skiing Area between Norðfjörður and Eskifjörður.  
Photo: Þráinn Kolbeinsson

environmental policies. The unique landscape, international cultural landscape and fresh ingredients nearby can create numerous opportunities for tourism.

## Good infrastructure

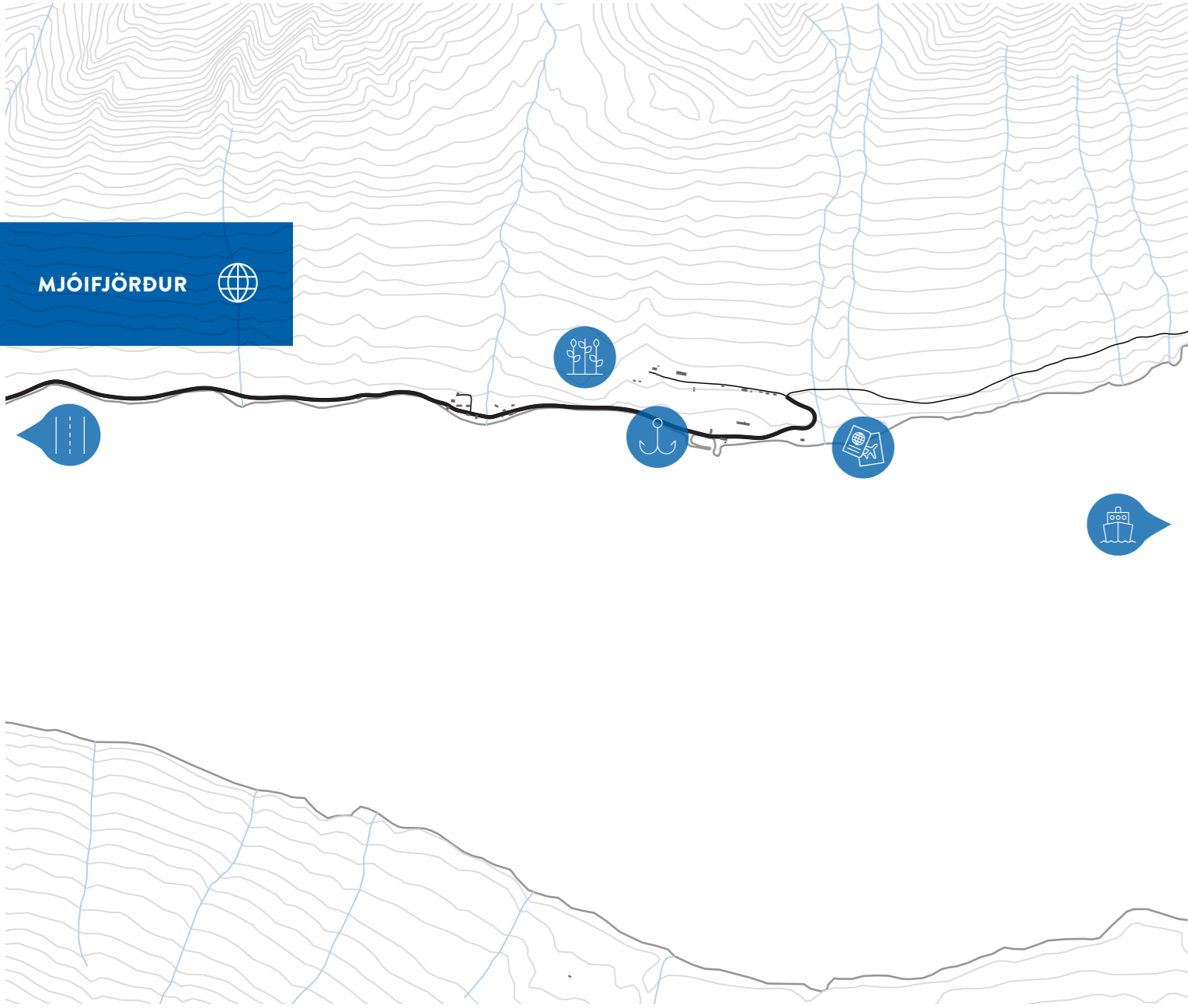
The construction of Norðfjörður- and Fáskrúðsfjörður tunnels made transportation on land very good. Power distribution is secure, Internet connection good and all villages are covered by a 4G network. Most rural areas are connected to fibre-optic cable. Strong service institutions and thriving industry and fishery companies operate within the municipality. Many contractors and service providers are experienced working with parties within and outside of the area on both small- and large-scale projects. The tourism industry offers first-class accommodations and restaurants.

## Public service

Both healthcare and welfare service are of high quality, e.g. the regional hospital of East Iceland operates in Neskaupstaður, employing many qualified professionals. It offers diverse healthcare service such as surgery and midwifery. Good facilities are in place for sports involvement and outdoor recreation, and educational and research institutions offer quality education, but education on all levels is available in Fjarðabyggð. Facilities for culture to thrive are good when taking the size of the community into account, and after a special cultural centre run by the municipality was founded, public support for culture has probably never been higher.

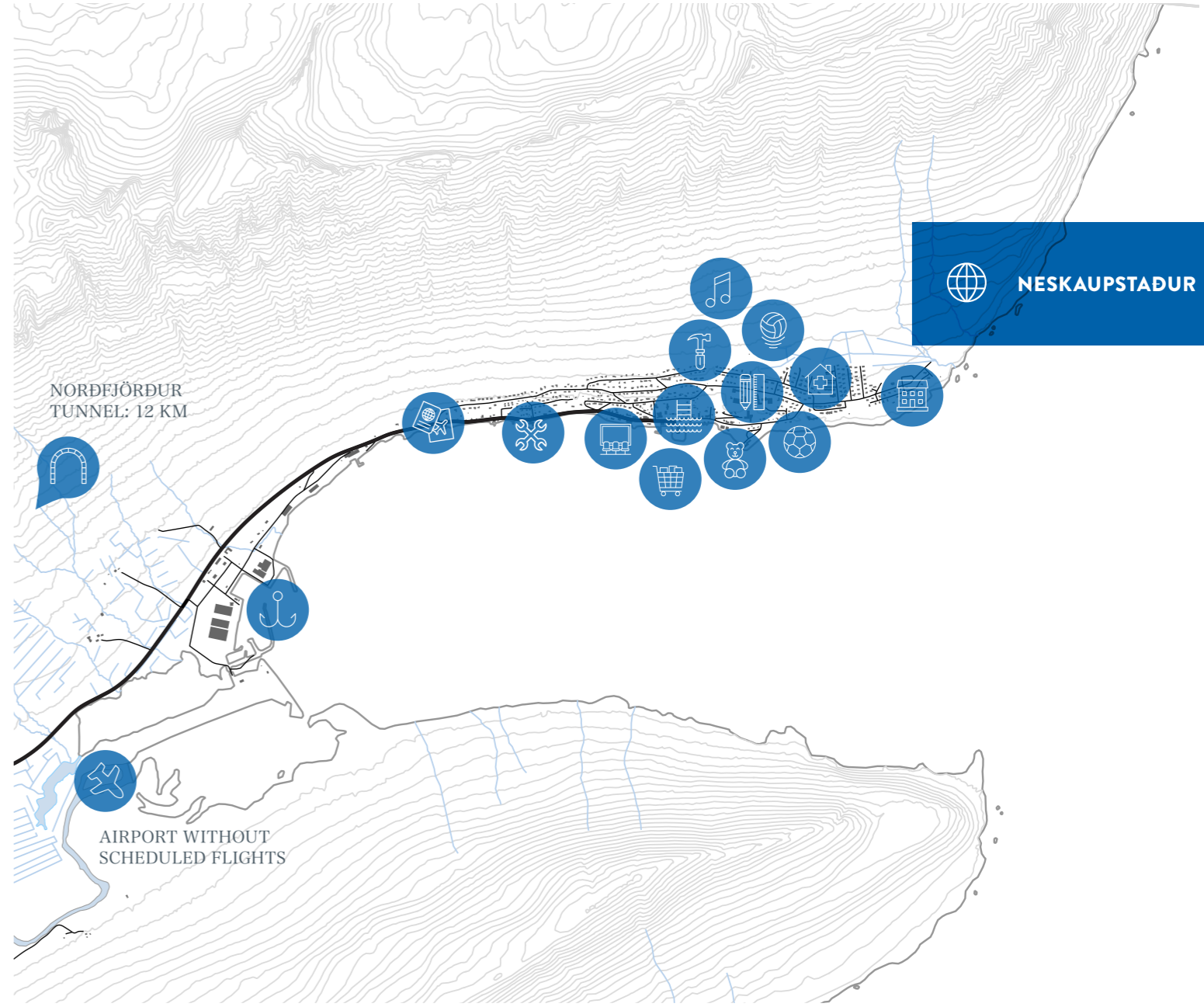


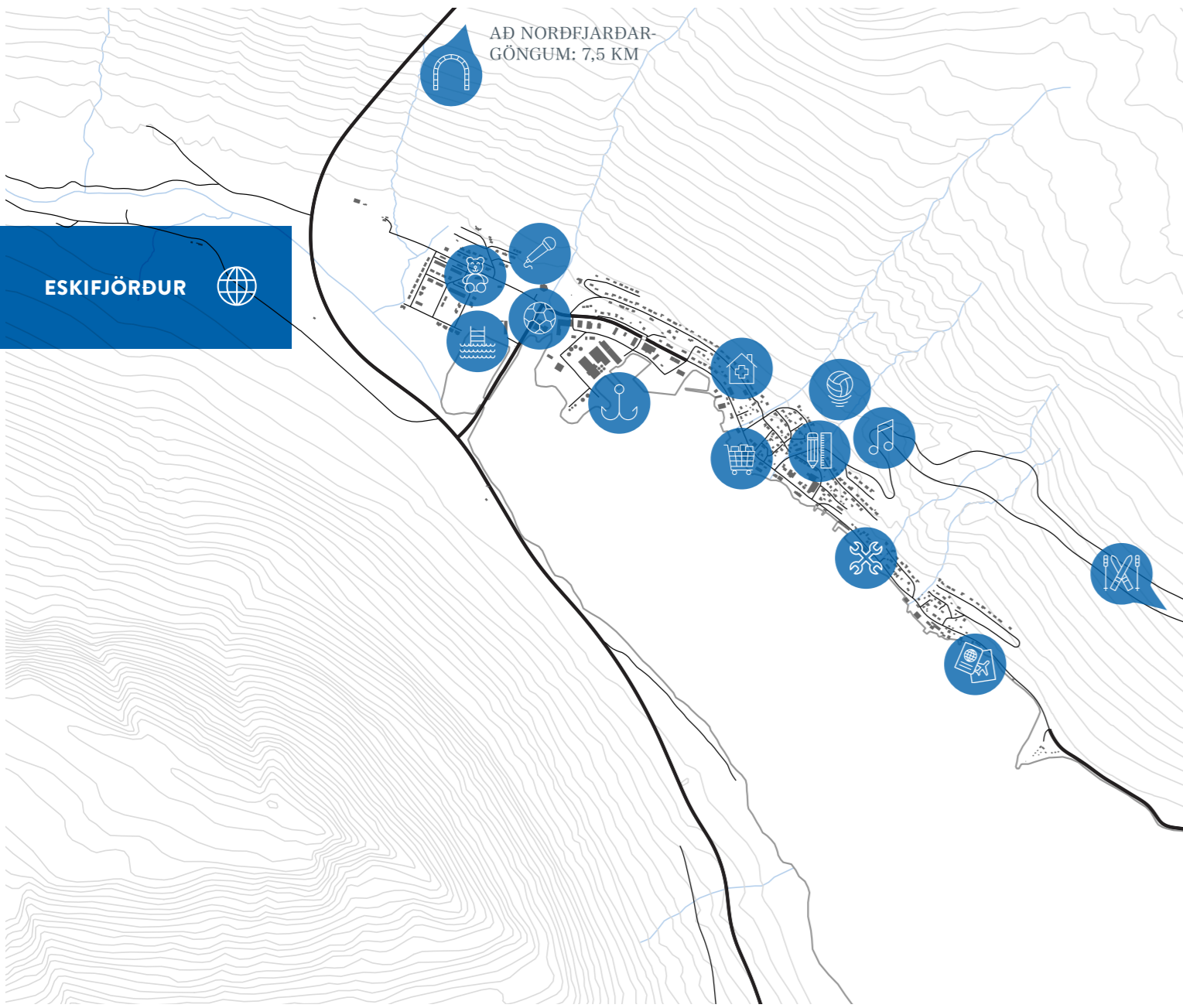
Sunset in Fáskrúðsfjörður.  
Photo : Maria Szabo



-  ROAD TRANSPORT: OPEN IRREGULARLY DURING WINTER
-  FERRY TO AND FROM NESKAUPSTAÐUR TWICE A WEEK
-  FISHERIES
-  AGRICULTURE
-  TOURISM

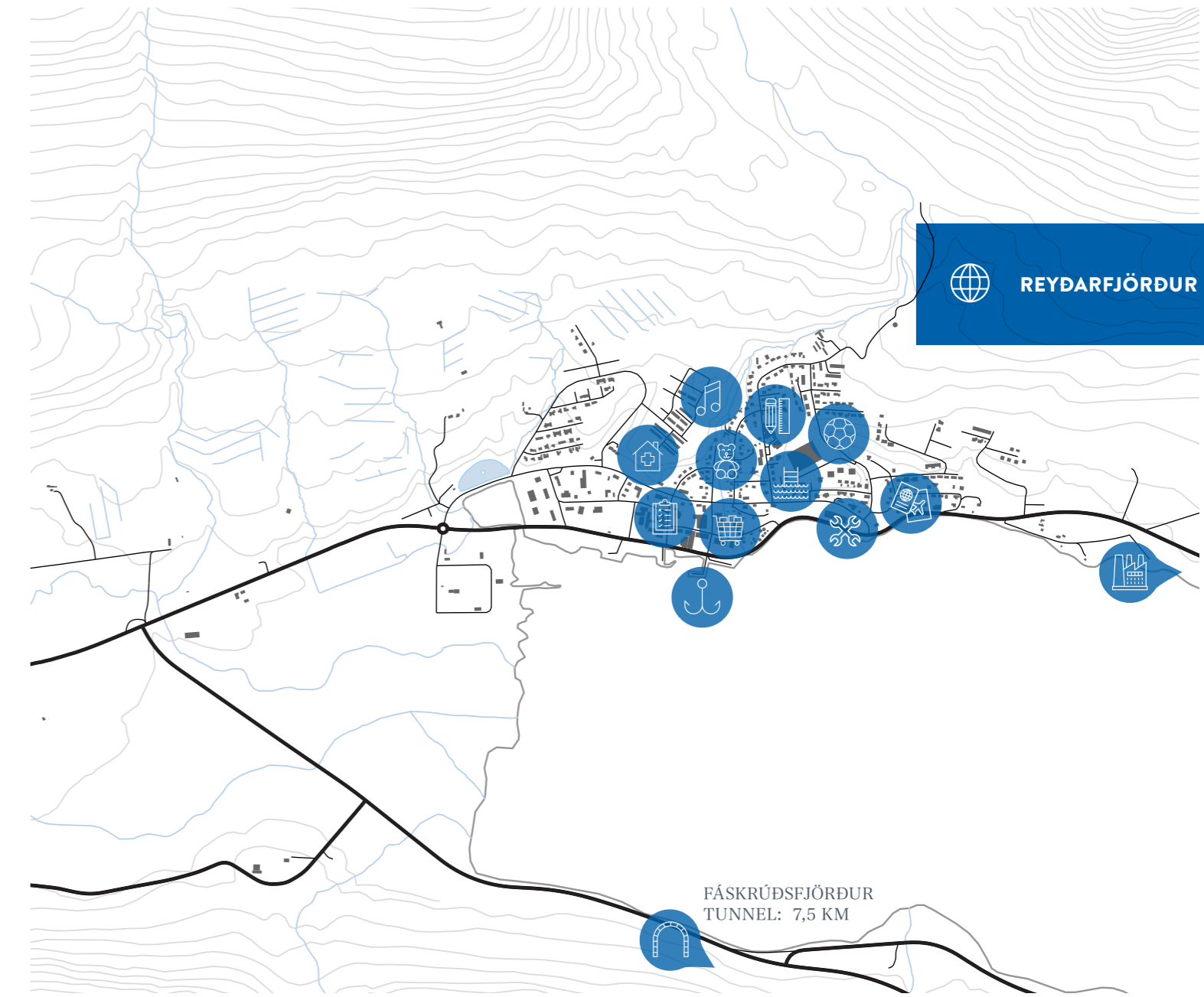
-  FISHERIES, FISH-NET PRODUCTION AND SMALL BOAT FISHERY
-  ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH
-  SPORTS CENTRE
-  TOURISM: ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANTS
-  KINDERGARTEN
-  ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
-  VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
-  MUSIC SCHOOL
-  SWIMMING POOL
-  REGIONAL HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CLINIC
-  CULTURAL HOUSE
-  COMMERCE AND SERVICE
-  INDUSTRY AND CONTRACTORS
-  MÚLINN, CO-OP WORKPLACE



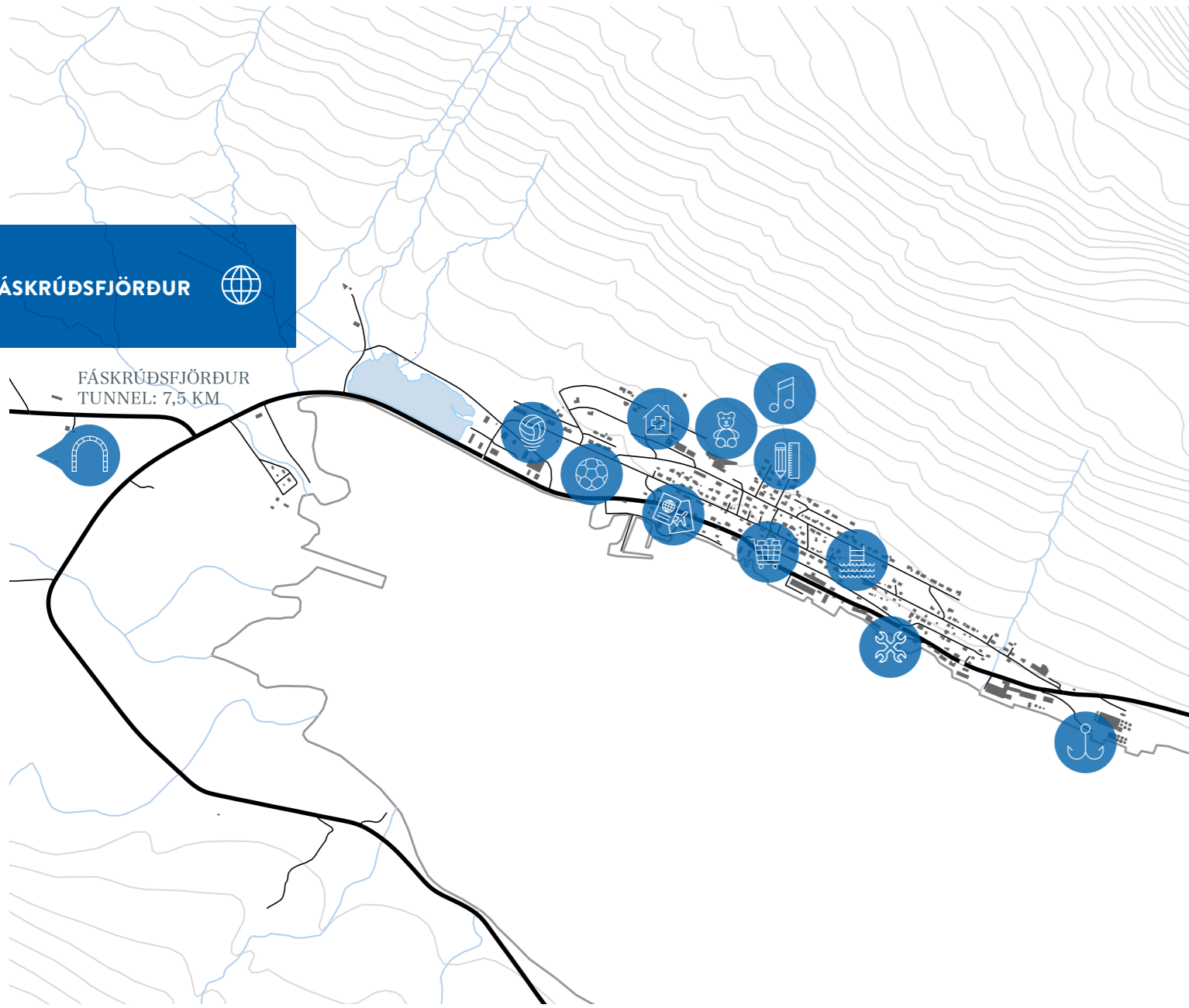


- FISHERIES, FISH-NET PRODUCTION, SMALL BOAT FISHERY, FISH FARMING, CRUISE SHIPS
- FOOTBALL FIELD
- SWIMMING POOL
- TOURISM: ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANTS
- KINDERGARTEN
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- HEALTH CLINIC
- MUSIC SCHOOL
- SPORTS CENTER
- ODDSSKARD SKIING AREA: 7 KM
- MUSIC AND CULTURE CENTRE
- COMMERCE AND SERVICE
- INDUSTRY AND CONTRACTORS

- FISHERIES, FISH FARMING, SMALL BOAT FISHERY
- STADIUM AND SPORTS CENTRE
- SWIMMING POOL
- TOURISM: ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANTS
- KINDERGARTEN
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- HEALTH CLINIC
- MUSIC SCHOOL
- COMMERCE AND SERVICE
- INDUSTRY AND CONTRACTORS
- HEAVY INDUSTRY
- PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



FÁSKRÚDSFJÖRÐUR



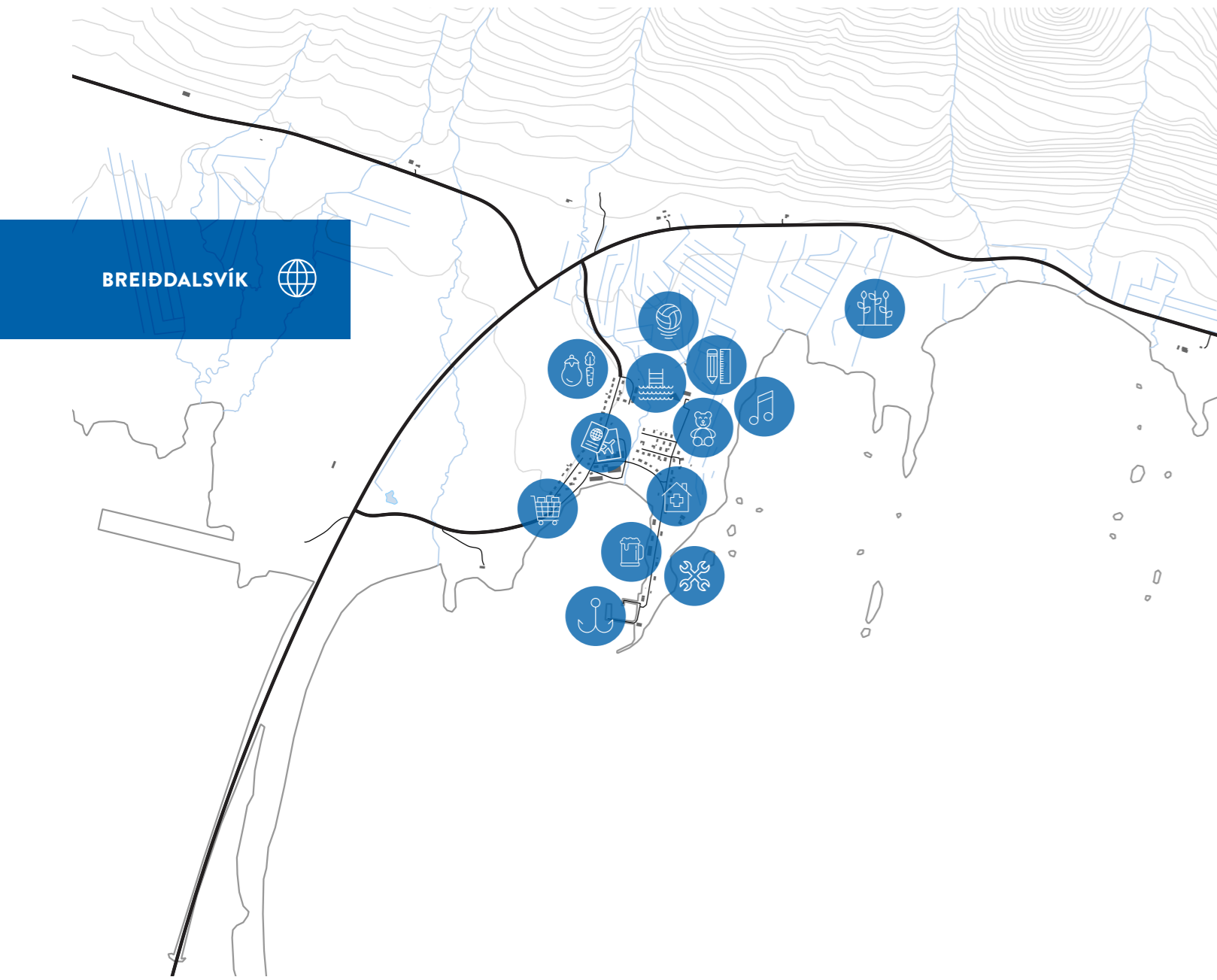
- FISHERIES, FISH FARMING AND SMALL BOAT FISHERY
- FOOTBALL FIELD
- SWIMMING POOL
- TOURISM: ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANTS
- KINDERGARTEN
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- HEALTH CLINIC
- MUSIC SCHOOL
- SPORTS CENTRE
- COMMERCE AND SERVICE
- INDUSTRY AND CONTRACTORS

- FISHERIES, FISH FARMING AND SMALL BOAT FISHERY
- SWIMMING POOL
- TOURISM: ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANTS
- KINDERGARTEN
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- HEALTH CLINIC
- MUSIC SCHOOL
- SPORTS CENTRE
- THE FISH FACTORY CREATIVE CENTRE
- COMMERCE
- INDUSTRY AND CONTRACTORS
- FOOTBALL FIELD



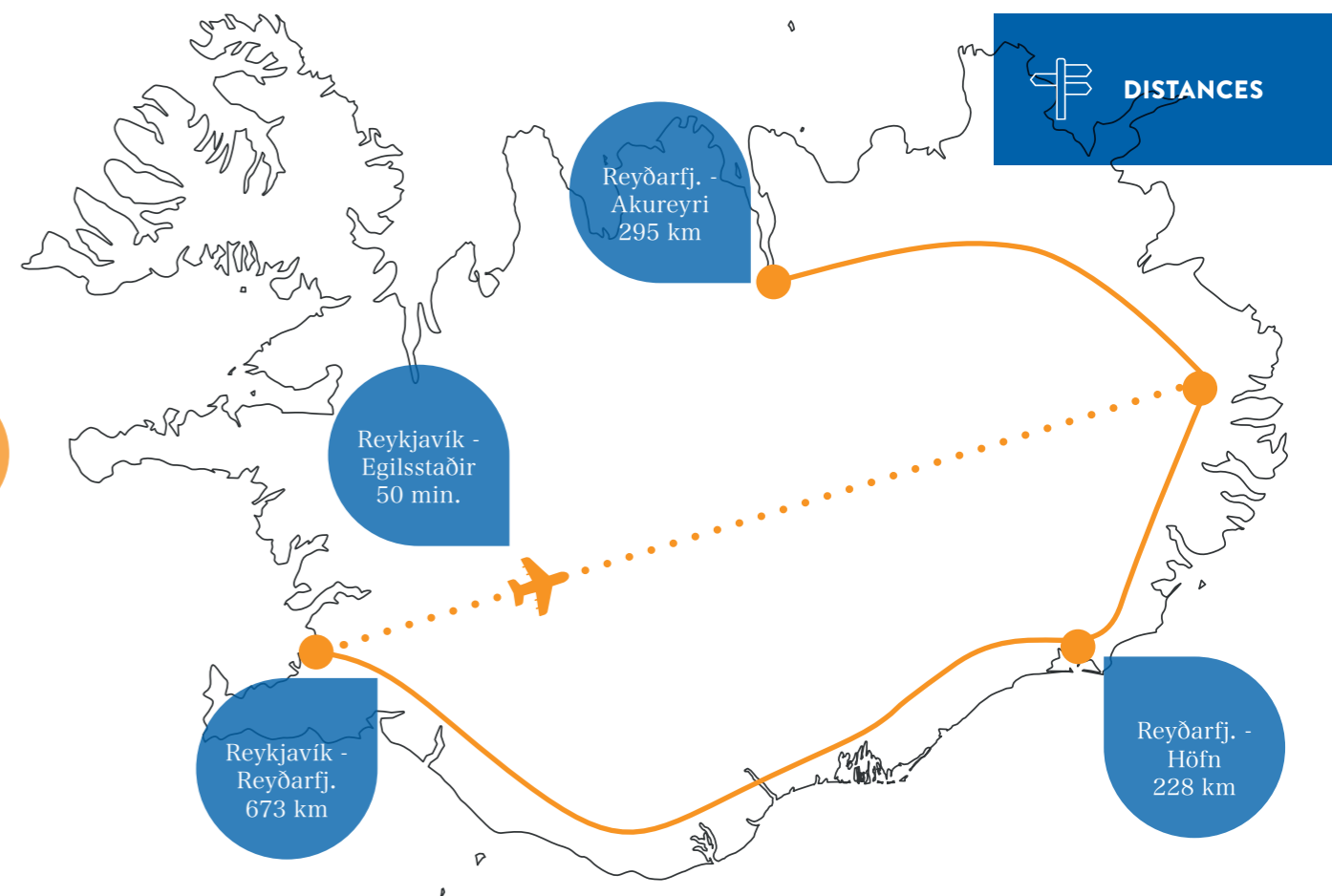
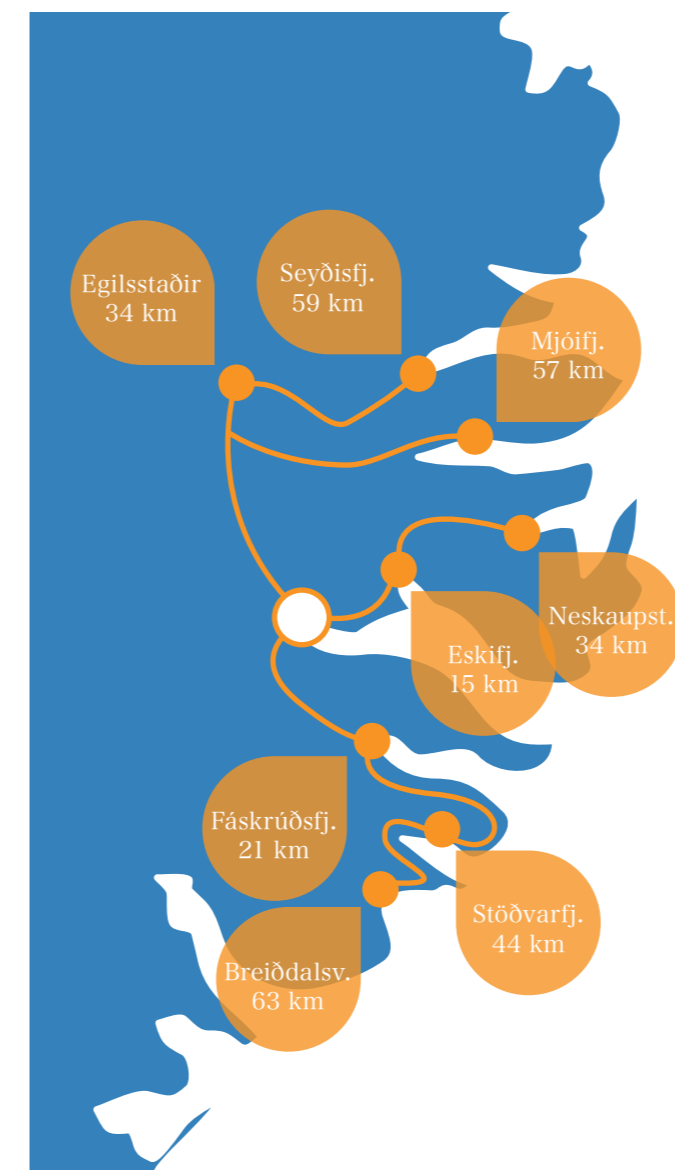
STÖÐVARFJÖRÐUR





- FISHERIES AND SMALL BOAT FISHERY
- AGRICULTURE
- SWIMMING POOL
- TOURISM: ACCOMMODATION AND RESTAURANTS
- KINDERGARTEN
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- HEALTH CLINIC
- MUSIC SCHOOL
- SPORTS CENTRE
- FOOD PRODUCTION DEVELOPMENT
- COMMERCE
- INDUSTRY AND CONTRACTORS
- BREWERY

DISTANCES FROM REYÐARFJÖRÐUR



**DISTANCES**



# Climate

## ENVIRONMENT



The mountainous landscape and closeness to the ocean affect Fjarðabyggð's climate. When the weather is calm, the mountains reflect romantically in the surface of the water, a fjord experience to remember. The low mean temperature during summer defines the climate. The Fog of the East Fjords is a unique and picturesque phenomenon that puts its mark on the area's climate and factors in the low temperature, especially during the summer months.

Prevailing winds vary depending on the location: at the head of the fjords or at the coastline facing the open ocean. Circulation depends on places; for example, on Kambsnes, the prevailing winds are SW and NE, but stronger winds are mostly SSW and NNE. Western winds prevail on the other hand in Breiðdalur, dominated by the landscape of the valley.

### Further information:

The Icelandic Met Office runs a wind atlas ([en.vindatlas.vedur.is](http://en.vindatlas.vedur.is)) where overviews of prevailing winds, circulation and wind speed distribution in Iceland can be found.



Fog in Eskifjörður.  
Photo: Kristófer Leó Ingason



Sandfell in Fáskrúðsfjörður.  
Photo: Björnfríður Fanney Þórðardóttir

The area's bedrock belongs to Iceland's oldest geological formations. On one hand, there is basalt from lava- and effusive eruptions and on the other hand, volcanic formations from central volcanos (basalt, andesite and rhyolite). The municipality's bedrock is usually dense and subsoil water flow insignificant. Subsoil water flow can mainly be found in loose material, for instance flood plains, landslides and sand. Land formation is characterised by erosion and the carving of glaciers. Prominent in the landscape

is how the sedimentary strata generally leans to the west (inland). Various rock types can be found in the area, making the landscape unique, not the least in Breiðdalur. In Fjarðabyggð lies the remains of the world's largest spar quarry, Helgustaðanáma, which is on a conservation list.

The soil in Fjarðabyggð is generally thin, but vegetation covers most valleys and lowlands. When ascending the mountains, the vegetive covers decreases. Wet-



Kambaskriður between Stóðvarfjörður and Breiðdalsvík.  
Photo: Austurbrú

lands can often be found in the valleys. Natural woodland is scarce, but willow and low birch prevail there.

The main landscape feature of the municipality is its jagged coastline, with fjords, coves, valleys and high mountain ranges alternating. Many fjords and valleys are deep and narrow, reaching far inland. The mountains are steep, giving their surroundings strong features.

The fjords lie from east to west, and habitation has mainly developed on their north sides, facing the sun. The area's landscape has also put its mark on transportation between towns and villages, but in recent years, tunnels have made it easier and expanded the commuting area. Breiðdalur is the widest of the inhabited valleys in Fjarðabyggð, with good land space and lowland suitable for cultivation.

## GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE



Seals can be spotted in capes where human traffic is scarce.  
Photo: Skarphéðinn G. Þórisson



BIOTA



The proximity to the ocean makes the municipality a real seaside settlement. The fjords are the rearing grounds for various species of fish, especially cod and flatfish. Rich fishing grounds are relatively close to Breiðdalsvík, Eskifjörður and Norðfjörður. Conditions for fish farming have been considered good, especially in Mjólfjörður and Reyðarfjörður. Salmon farming has increased significantly in recent years, and prospects for future growth are good.

Rivers and streams are distinctive features of the landscape of Fjarðabyggð, both within and outside of the towns. Rivers, gulches and waterfalls are common in valley heads. Streams in inhabited

areas, especially Fáskrúðsfjörður and Eskifjörður, give the villages distinctive and interesting countenance. It is common for fish to march up the rivers, especially in the river Breiðdalsá. The diversity of insect life in Fjarðabyggð is considered average.

Bird life in Fjarðabyggð is richest by the sea, with the most common species being seagulls, eider duck and auk. Other common bird species in Fjarðabyggð are various moorland- and shorebirds. Stray birds are not uncommon in the area. Merlins and falcons are non-migratory, living in the mountains. The longest sand beach in Fjarðabyggð is Meleyri, at the bottom of Breiðdalsvík, 3 km long. It has

Reindeers taking a stroll in Neskaupstaður.  
Photo: Kristín Hávarðsdóttir



a rich and diverse birdlife and is a part of the Nature Conservation Register.

Above the towns, one can find forestry, but commercial forestry is uncommon at farms, except a bit in Breiðdalur. Heather, bog bilberry, lichen and moss are prominent in the mountains, but grass species, with natural habitats in alluvial soil fields, moors and sandy soil, are found in the lowlands.

Nature reserves and country parks have been founded to draw out the characteristics of the area – Hólmanes between Eskifjörður and Reyðarfjörður and Neskaupstaður Country Park, covering the area from the outskirts of the town

The waterfalls Klifbrekkufossar in Mjólfjörður.  
Photo: Marga Magdalena Baginska



of Neskaupstaður towards the mountain Norðfjarðarnípa, to name a few. Skrúður, an exceptional island outside of Fáskrúðsfjörður, is also on the Nature Conservation Register. Distinctive and unique outdoor recreational areas can be found in the municipality, e.g. Oddsskarð and the area around Gerpir, between Reyðarfjörður and Norðfjörður.

Fjarðabyggð, and the whole of East Iceland, is the only area in Iceland where reindeers roam wild in nature. In winters and during spring and autumn, they can be seen near villages and farms, but in summer, they stay up in the mountains and in the area around Gerpir.

Avalanche protection dams above Neskaupstaður.  
Photo: Kristín Guðmundsdóttir



Fjarðabyggð lies far outside of Iceland's volcanic belt, and therefore, there are no active volcanoes in the area and hazard from volcanic eruptions and earthquakes is minimal. Despite the proximity to the ocean, it is only in few places in Norðfjörður and Eskifjörður where protective measures against storm surges and land erosion are needed. The risk of pack ice (drift ice) is minimal in the Eastfjords, but land ice can form at certain weather conditions.

Despite the unique beauty of the mountainous landscape in East Iceland, the risk of avalanches and landslides exists in the area. According to hazard zoning assess-

ment, a large part of the inhabited area in Norðfjörður is on a hazard zone, and protective measures against avalanches have been constructed. Eskifjörður deals with a risk of landslides, slush floods and flash floods. To minimise the hazard, riverbeds have been deepened and completion and finishing of drains and bridges have been improved. Fáskrúðsfjörður has no avalanche risk, and risk due to landslides and falling rocks is considered minor. In the coming years, the construction of protective measures against avalanches and landslides will be completed. Other villages in Fjarðabyggð are not considered to be in danger, neither due to avalanches nor landslides.



The mounting of avalanche protection measures in Tröllagil above Neskaupstaður.  
Photos: Esther Ósp Gunnarsdóttir



NATURAL HAZARDS



# Transportation

## ON LAND

Iceland's highway number 1 lies through the south of the municipality and from there, through Fagridalur to Egilsstaðir. This means that most trips to and from East Iceland go through the municipality. Trucks from transport companies, the postal service and convenience stores drive to and from Fjarðabyggð all working days.

About 90% of East Iceland's inhabitants live within an hour's drive from Reyðarfjörður. Tunnels between Reyðarfjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður, on the one hand, and from Eskifjörður to Norðfjörður, on the other hand, have reduced travel times and significantly improved transportation in central East Iceland.

The driving time to Reykjavík is roughly the same whether the north or south route is chosen, about 8 hours. Akureyri is 3.5 hours' drive from Egilsstaðir, and some of Iceland's most popular tourist attractions are within a few hours' drive:

Vatnajökull National Park (1.5 hours), Mývatn (2 hours), Höfn (2.5 hours), Húsavík (3 hours) and Jökulsárlón (3.5 hours).

A bus network connects the towns in Fjarðabyggð, making it equal for its inhabitants to seek employment, education and leisure. Fjarðabyggð partakes in a bus network operated across East Iceland under the name SvAust, which connects the bus schedule within the municipality to other communities in East Iceland and further. A fly bus also operates between the airport in Egilsstaðir and towns in Fjarðabyggð.



Tunnel mouth to the Norðfjörður tunnel at the bottom of Eskifjörður. Photo: Bjarki Jóhannsson



Bridge on road no. 1 close to Meleyri in Breiðdalur. Photo: Páll Guðmundur Ásgeirsson



The Ring Road (1) lies through the southern part of the municipality. Photo: Austurbrú

Airport for domestic and international flights is in Egilsstaðir, 30 minutes' driving distance from Reyðarfjörður. Photo: Ragnar Th. Sigurðsson



Egilsstaðir Airport. Photo: Ingvi Örn Þorsteinsson

A gravel landing strip in Neskaupstaður, mostly used for ambulance flight but also tourism. Photo: Fjarðabyggð



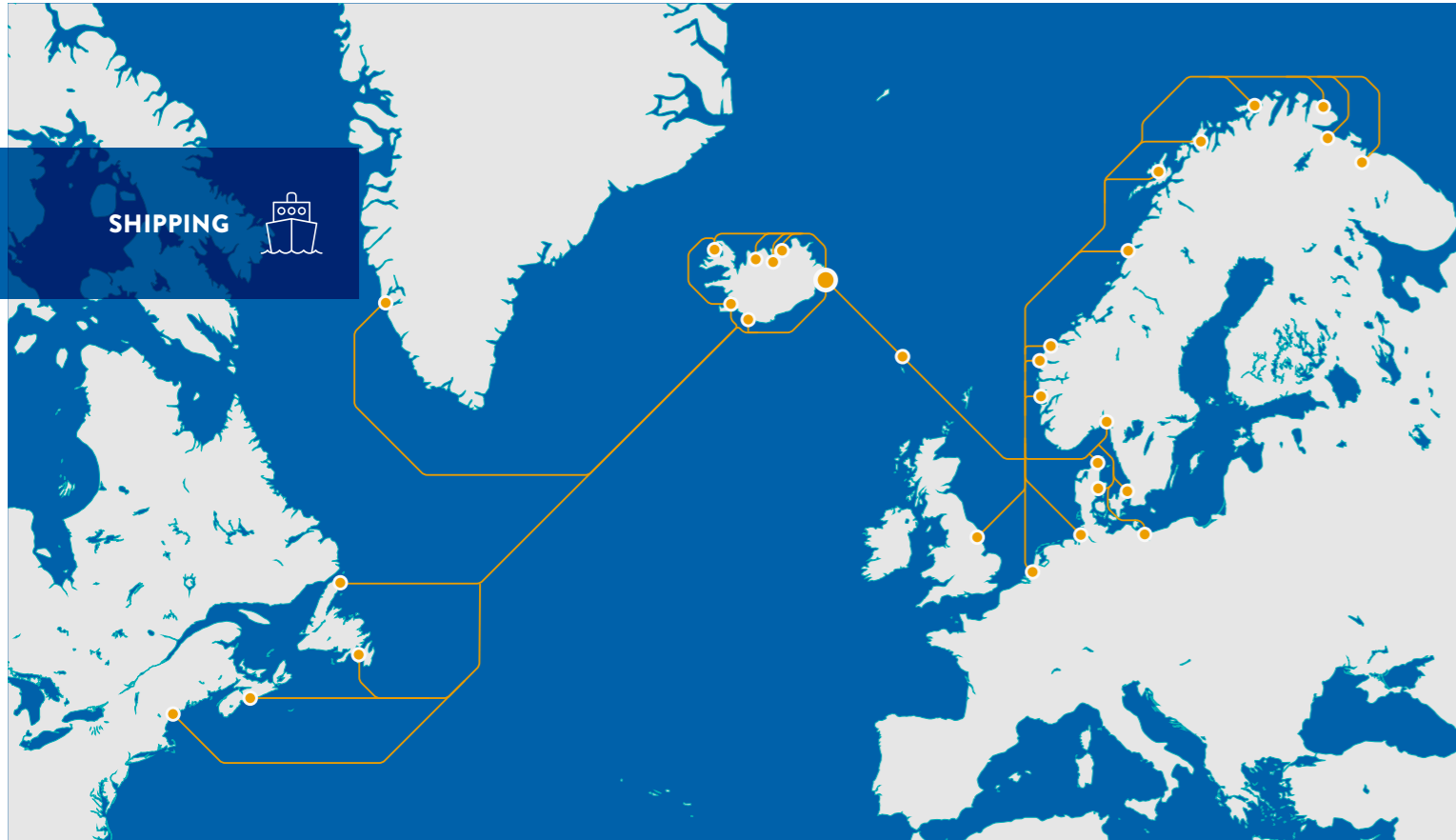
## AVIATION

An airport is in Neskaupstaður (NOR/BINF), service level D, i.e. a landing place without scheduled flights but providing necessary equipment and service as needed. It is a 1,112 m long and 30 m wide gravel strip, first and foremost meant for ambulance flight in connection with East Iceland's district hospital. The airport also offers opportunities in connection with private, teaching and tourist aviation.

Egilsstaðir International Airport is one of four airports in Iceland which fulfils requirements for international flights. The airport serves as an alternate airport for Keflavik Airport. The airport is up to high standards with well-equipped

fire and rescue service. Egilsstaðir International Airport is very well equipped for snow removal and is open all year round. Flight and approach conditions are good. The reliability of scheduled flights is therefore good, or close to 99%. The Icelandic government has officially declared that Egilsstaðir Airport should have scheduled international flights in the near future. Flying time between Egilsstaðir and Reykjavík is approx. 50 minutes. Keflavik International Airport is positioned 50 km outside of Reykjavík. The inhabitants of Fjarðabyggð can apply for Loftbrú, a transportation improvement, that gives 40% price discount for scheduled, domestic flights to and from the capital.

## SHIPPING



The ports of Fjarðabyggð (together named Fjarðabyggðarhafnir) have an important role in the region's, as well as the country's, transportation system. It is the second largest commercial port, after Faxaflóahafnir, when it comes to total exports of goods, and a big portion of the nation's fish-catches are unshipped there.

International shipping of supplies and produce is also extensive. The ports are well situated for transportation on land within the municipality and onto highway number 1. The ports of Fjarðabyggð service all ships, boats and others that pass through them.

**Norðfjarðarhöfn** (the Port of Norðfjörður) is one of the largest fishing ports in Iceland. The harbour area is divided into the main port at the bottom of the fjord, on the one hand, and piers in Neskaupstaður on the other hand. A large and well-sheltered marina is also

in the main port. The town's piers are mainly used for berthing, jigging and sight-seeing. Smaller passenger vessels have also ported there. The total quay length in Norðfjörður is 992 metres.

**Eskifjarðarhöfn** (the Port of Eskifjörður) is a large fish- and shipping port, with five piers and a marina. The largest of them is the shipping pier with three quays. Cruise ships coming to Fjarðabyggð dock in Eskifjarðarhöfn. Construction of a new 150-metre-long pier with pile foundation on Eskja's premises is underway. Construction should be finished by 2022, after which the quay's total length will be 995 metres.

**Mjóeyrarhöfn** (The Port of Mjóeyri) is in the north of Reyðarfjörður, between Reyðarfjörður and Eskifjörður. The harbour, with a 380-metre-long quay, was constructed at the same time as the Alcoa Fjarðaál aluminium plant. Mjóeyrarhöfn is among the largest commercial ports in Iceland. The harbour fosters vast opportunities for further development and investment in harbour-related operation and is still being developed as one of the municipality's growth areas for such operations. In accordance with the revised master plan, a new harbour area is planned at the east side of Alcoa's aluminium plant in the land of Flateyri.

The Port of Norðfjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



**Reyðarfjarðarhöfn** (the Port of Reyðarfjörður) mostly serves as a commercial port. Three main piers are in Reyðarfjörður that are mostly used, in addition to shipping, for berthing. It also has a marina. The total length of quays in Reyðarfjörður is 408 metres.

**Fáskrúðsfjarðarhöfn** (the Port of Fáskrúðsfjörður) is a large fishing port with four main piers in operation, as well as a marina. The quay's total length is 487 metres. A small pier is also at the French Museum, where pleasure boats berth.

**Stöðvarfjarðarhöfn** (the Port of Stöðvarfjörður) is a popular marina located near

the mouth of the fjord. The fjord is short, convenient to operate from. In addition to a marina, three quay walls are in Stöðvarfjarðarhöfn: Gamli garður, Nýi garður and a new 58-metre-long wooden pier. The total length of quays is around 300 metres.

**Breiðdalsvíkurhöfn** (the Port of Breiðdalsvík) is also a popular marina located in the inner part of Breiðdalsvík. The total length of shipping quay walls is 112 metres. It also has a 58-metre-long wooden pier and a marina. A short distance from the port are fishing grounds.

The Port of Mjóeyri.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



**Mjóafjarðarhöfn** (the Port of Mjóifjörður) is among the smallest ports in the country. It has a 20-metre-long ferry pier and a marina.

The ferry **Norröna** sails weekly between Seyðisfjörður (59 km from Reyðarfjörður), Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands and Hirtshals in Denmark. The ferry transports people, cars and goods. Freighters from three shipping companies come regularly to Fjarðabyggðarhafnir. From Reyðarfjörður, the freighters sail both straight to Europe and to other ports in Iceland. Large fishery vessels are operated from three of Fjarðabyggð's towns: Neskaupstaður, Eskifjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður. Fjarðabyggðarhafnir also receive

cruise ships; they have been a member of Cruise Iceland since 2008 and participated in the association's joint promotion as well as other marketing operations.

## Ports and piers

### Mjóifjörður

- » Ferry pier, 12 m long and 5 m depth.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

### Norðfjörður

- » 8 quays and a wooden pier. Quay depth 4–10 m. The longest quay is 334 m with a maximum depth of 10 m.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

### Eskifjörður

- » 8 quays. Quay depth 4–10 m. The longest quay is 174 m with a maximum depth of 8 m.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

### Reyðarfjörður

- » 6 quays. Quay depth 5–8 m. The longest quay is 100 m with a maximum depth of 7.5 m.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

### The Port of Mjóeyri

- » Shipping pier, 383 m long and 14.2 m deep.

### Fáskrúðsfjörður

- » 6 quays and a wooden pier. Quay depth 6.5–8 m. The longest quay is 113 m with a maximum depth of 7.5 m.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

### Stöðvarfjörður

- » 6 quays and a wooden pier. Quay depth 6.5–8 m. The longest quay is 80 m with a maximum depth of 6.5 m.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

### Breiðdalsvík

- » 3 quays and a wooden pier. Quay depth 6.5–8 m. The longest quay is 113 m with a maximum depth of 7.5 m.
- » Port and facilities for small boats unloading.

The Port of Eskifjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



Marine in Fáskrúðsfjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



The Port of Fáskrúðsfjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



The Port of Reyðarfjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



The Port of Stöðvarfjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



The Port of Breiðdalsvík.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



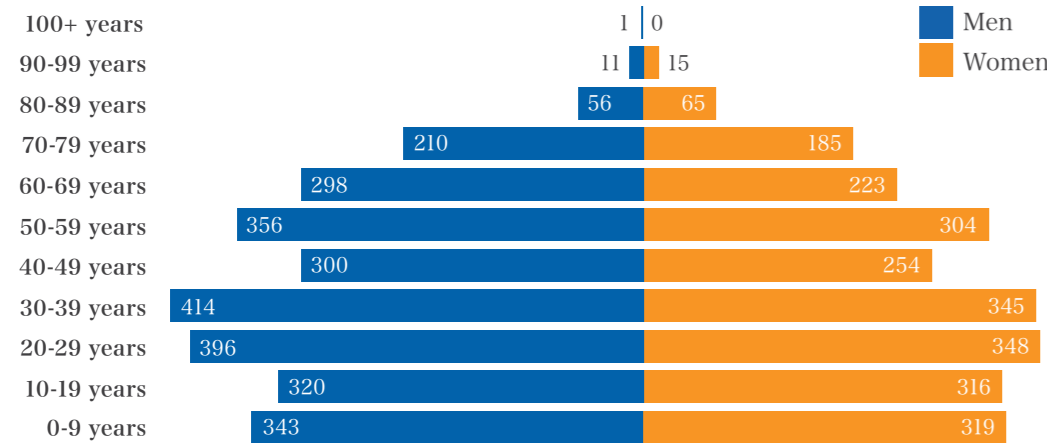
# Society

## HOUSING AND RESIDENTS



Reyðarfjörður.  
Photo: Ásgeir Metúsalemsson

### POPULATIONS BY GENDER AND AGE



Fjarðabyggð's main goal is to ensure stability and security in housing affairs. The municipality has encouraged the construction of buildings through significant discount or cancellation of charge for municipal street construction in planned districts where infrastructure is already constructed. In Fjarðabyggð, about 75% of residential houses are single-family homes or duplexes, but around 14% of buildings have six apartments or more. Around 6% of buildings have more than 13 apartments. The average apartment size in Fjarðabyggð is around 130 square metres. The municipality endeavours to ensure inhabitants equal access to its services independent of their residence, through improved transportation or by securing the ser-

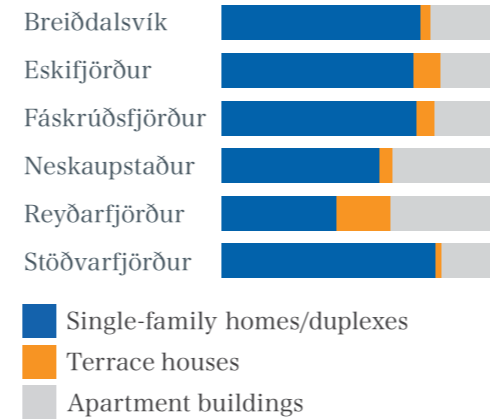
vice close to its receivers. Demand for housing in the municipality has been significant. Supply has been highest in Reyðarfjörður, Eskifjörður and Neskaupstaður. As in many towns outside of the capital, housing prices have been under construction prices.

The municipality endeavours to ensure inhabitants equal access to its services independent of their residence, through improved transportation or by securing the service close to its receivers.

Construction project in Reyðarfjörður.  
Photo: Fjarðabyggð



### APARTMENT TYPES - PROPORTIONALLY



The municipality offers diverse services for the general welfare of its inhabitants. The Department of Families in Fjarðabyggð offers information on, professional consultation regarding and guidance about finances and help in personal difficulties.

## Kindergartens and elementary schools

In Fjarðabyggð are four kindergartens and five elementary schools, as well as a music education centre. Students in the kindergartens number around 400, aged one to six years old. Generally, children can start kindergarten at the age of one. More than 700 pupils are in Fjarðabyggð's elementary schools, which work closely and well together.

Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands offers varied art education.  
Photo: Esther Ósp Gunnarsdóttir



## Upper secondary schools

Two secondary schools are in East Iceland: Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands (East Iceland's comprehensive college) and Menntaskólinn á Egilsstöðum (The Egilsstaðir Junior College). They offer diverse study lines, both vocational and academic. In addition, basic and additional education is available for all ages. The vocational school has a dormitory and canteen, as well as good facilities in a recent house for manual training. Students can use public transport. In addition, Hallormsstaðaskóli offers studies in sustainability and creativity at the 4th step of the Icelandic Qualification Framework (ISQF).



## WELFARE AND EDUCATION

Different industrial and technical study lines are available to students at Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands, e.g. in motor technology as well as mechanics and metal. Photo: Esther Ósp Gunnarsdóttir

## Other education

Austurbrú provides a co-ordinated and interdisciplinary service related to economy, education and culture. It offers a range of adult education courses and personal services, such as competence assessment and student counselling. It assists both companies and institutions to make education projects. Austurbrú also serves university students. It has offices

in Reyðarfjörður and Neskaupstaður with facilities for students to follow their distance learning courses and take exams. University of Iceland's Institute of Research Centres operates two offices in East Iceland: in Breiðdalsvík, with focus on geoscience and linguistics, and in Egilsstaðir, with a focus on the relationship between humans and nature.



Eistnaflug is a yearly heavy metal festival in Neskaupstaður taking place around the first weekend in July.  
Photo: Helga Kvam.

Fjarðabyggð has a thriving and strong cultural life that has become stronger in recent years with working artists, cultural festivals and events, public cultural centres and a general awakening of the importance of cultural life for society. Once a year, the municipality supports culture through financial grants, and artists can also apply to the East Iceland Structural Fund.

East Iceland has three cultural centres, each working with culture in general but also specialising in a special cultural field. In Fjarðabyggð, Tónlistarmiðstöð Austurlands (music and culture centre) specialises in music, and in 2017, Fjarðabyggð Cultural Centre (Menningarstofa Fjarðabyggðar) was established to support and promote cultural activities in Fjarðabyggð. Accessibility to assembly rooms for smaller meetings, conferences, exhibitions and concerts is good.

## The Fish Factory, Creative Centre of Stöðvarfjörður

The centre offers artists residencies and hosts diverse groups of artists and musicians from around the world every year. It has good and miscellaneous facilities such as carpentry, blacksmith and ceramic- and printing workshops in addition to a sound studio.



Studio Síló in the Creative Centre in Stöðvarfjörður.  
Photo: Esther Ösp Gunnarsdóttir

## Museums and galleries

Fjarðabyggð Museum Institution oversees the running of museums and cultural affairs in the municipality. Its units cover everything from libraries to different historical museums that deal with different aspects of the municipality's history, a natural museum and art museums. In addition, Fjarðabyggð has a few galleries; the best known is Gallery Snærós in Stöðvarfjörður.

## Cultural and town festivals

Fairly large cultural festivals are held in Fjarðabyggð that have grabbed a nationwide attention, e.g. Eistnaflug in Neskaupstaður. Town festivals such as Franskir dagar in Fáskrúðsfjörður, Neistaflug in Neskaupstaður, Útsæðið in Eskifjörður and Hernámsdagurinn in Reyðarfjörður are well established with long history. A few cultural events cover all of East Iceland, such as BRAS, Children's Culture Festival and Days of Darkness. In 2020, Austurland Freeride Festival was held for the first time, with Oddskarð Ski Area as the main venue, and The Family's Technical Day is a yearly event in Neskaupstaður, where light is shed on the use of technology and sciences in the local community.

## Arts and culture clubs

At least two drama societies are active in Fjarðabyggð, and the music club BRJÁN in Neskaupstaður has been active for years. Listasmiðja Norðfjarðar (art workshop) also has a long history. East Iceland Symphony was recently established, mostly working from Fjarðabyggð, consisting of many musicians residing in the municipality and elsewhere. Many choirs are active in the municipality, most of them connected to church work.



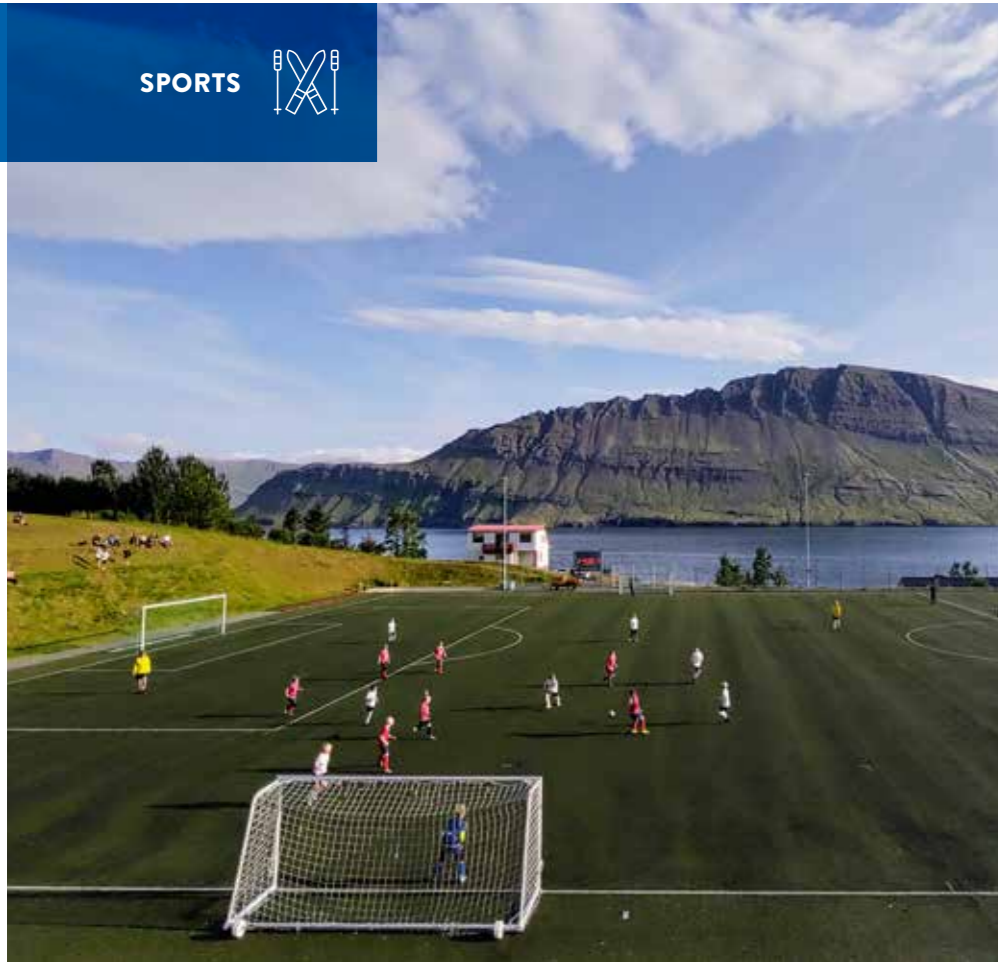
Rósa Valtingoer making popular ceramic birds in the Fish Factory in Stöðvarfjörður.  
Photo: Esther Ösp Gunnarsdóttir



East Iceland Symphony performing with the men's choirs Armenn, Drifandi and Stigamenn at a concert in Tónlistarmiðstöð Austurlands in Eskifjörður.  
Photo: Sebastian Ziegler

# Social activity

SPORTS



Good facilities for sports involvement can be found in Fjarðabyggð, for example a large artificial grass field in Neskaupstaður. Photo: Jóhann P. Þórðarson



Volleyball has a long history in Neskaupstaður, when the weather is good it is possible to play it outside. Photo: Hrafnhiildur Þórarinsdóttir

Outdoor recreation and physical activity all year is encouraged in Fjarðabyggð. In wintertime, outdoors people enjoy their life in Oddskarð, one of the country's best skiing areas. Ski and snowboard clubs in Fjarðabyggð use it for their operations.

Good sports facilities meet the needs of the vigorous sports activities in the municipality, where clubs for different sports branches are active. Well-equipped sports centres with gyms are in the villages. Five swimming pools, three

golf courses, an equestrian centre and a football hall, to name a few, are in the municipality. Every town has a sports club. The larger clubs' activities are quite diverse, with some of them split up into specific departments. The clubs have different emphasis, e.g. in Reyðarfjörður wrestling is practised, while volleyball is very popular in Norðfjörður. Interest in skiing has always been strong, not surprising with the great facilities offered in Fjarðabyggð for that sport.

## Charities and residents' associations

Departments of The Red Cross operate in every town. Women's associations have a long history in East Iceland, contributing through different charities and social issues. In Fjarðabyggð, different international charities operate, e.g. Lions and Rotary, with different activity levels though. Residents' associations have been founded in the villages after they merged into Fjarðabyggð. These associations cover issues important for each village and function as a pressure group.

## Rescue teams

Five rescue teams are in Fjarðabyggð. They are well equipped, and through the years, extensive local knowledge has been created which is invaluable for rescue work in and around East Iceland. Some of the teams have special programmes for youngsters.

## Touring clubs

Two touring clubs are active in the municipality, Ferðafélag fjarðamanna and Göngufélag suðurfjarða, and its members are enthusiastic about physical outdoor activity. They publish hikers' maps, organise a hiking program every year and operate lodges. Every June, Ferðafélag Fjarðamanna, in collaboration with Mjóeyri Travel Service, organises Fjarðabyggð Hiking Week, where Fjarðabyggð's highest mountain peaks are climbed.

## Other organised social activities

In addition, associations of retired persons, congregations and forestry societies are active in some villages. Some political parties are also active in the area.

ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS



Five rescue teams operate in the municipality. Photo: Geisli Rescue Team, Fáskrúðsfjörður



# Service

PUBLIC



The Health Directorate of East Iceland (HSA) provides public health services in East Iceland, covering 16,200 square kilometres, from Bakkafjörður in the north to Álftafjörður in the south, from highlands down to the coast. HSA is obliged to provide accessible and, if possible, continuous and comprehensive health service in general practitioner service, nursing and public health, in addition to general hospital service.

The District Hospital of East Iceland is in Neskaupstaður. A surgery and mid-wifery are operated there in addition to a health clinic. Health clinics are also in Reyðarfjörður, Eskifjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður. Stöðvarfjörður and Breiðdalsvík have smaller units of healthcare clinics.

East Iceland Police District is vast and operates six units. The main office is in Eskifjörður, but smaller ones are in Egilsstaðir, Fáskrúðsfjörður, Neskaupstaður, Djúpivogur and Vopnafjörður. An

investigation department is in Fáskrúðsfjörður, covering the whole area.

East Iceland has one **district commissioner**, based in Seyðisfjörður, but with offices also in Vopnafjörður, Eskifjörður and Egilsstaðir. The region's District Court is based in Egilsstaðir, with jurisdiction in all the municipalities in East Iceland and the Hornafjörður municipality.

**Fjarðabyggð's Fire Brigade** is one of the few fire brigades outside of the capital with professional firefighters. Its main office is at the Mjóeyri Port in Reyðarfjörður. The brigade also has workstations, not operating on a daily basis, in Norðfjörður, Fáskrúðsfjörður, Stöðvarfjörður and Breiðdalur. The unit consists of 70 people. The fire brigade, in addition to firefighting and fire prevention, runs the ambulance service for whole of Fjarðabyggð. Firefighters and paramedics are on watch 24 hours a day.

**Matís** has the role, among other things, of increasing innovation in and strengthening competitiveness of Icelandic food production internationally. It runs a department in Neskaupstaður whose



Fjarðabyggð has one of the few professional fire brigades in the countryside. Photo: Slökkvilið Fjarðabyggðar

main activity involves analytical services (microbiological and chemical measurements) for fish-processing plants and fishing companies, East Iceland Public Health Authority, Alcoa Fjarðaál and Landsvirkjun (The National Power Company of Iceland).

**Náttúrustofa Austurlands** (East Iceland Nature Research Centre) is a cornerstone institution for the study and conservation of nature and environment in East Iceland. The institute has two offices, one in Neskaupstaður and the other in Egilsstaðir.

**RARIK** (Iceland State Electricity) is the distributor of electricity in most municipi-

ties outside of the capital region and has offices in Egilsstaðir, Neskaupstaður and Fáskrúðsfjörður.

**Hafrannsóknastofnun**, the largest marine and freshwater research institute in Iceland has an office in Neskaupstaður whose focus is on projects connected to fish catches in East Iceland and fish farming.

**Vegagerð ríkisins** (The Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration) is responsible for main and countryside roads in Iceland. Its central office in East Iceland is in Reyðarfjörður.



## FJARÐABYGGÐ'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS

The graphic photo shows proportional division of employees among the municipality's largest employers.



When Alcoa Fjarðaál's aluminium plant and Fljótsdalsstöð Power Plant were constructed, some companies in East Iceland underwent reorganisation in order to be able to service large employers and companies. This has led to strengthening of the service industry in the region, where service providers in most fields can be found.

All main insurance companies, civil engineering firms, auditors and banks have offices in Fjarðabyggð. Employees

also have access to strong labour unions guiding them on their rights. Contractors in groundwork and the construction industry in the area can service projects small and large. Garages can service most types of cars and engines.

A low-price store and a bakery are in Reyðarfjörður, and the other villages have convenience stores. In Fjarðabyggð, one of the country's better outdoor stores can be found, as well as different types of speciality stores, cafés and restaurants.

# Labour market

## WORKFORCE



Fjarðabyggð's inhabitants are more than 5,100, thereof about 730 foreign citizens. The estimated workforce size at the end of 2020 in Fjarðabyggð was around 2,470 persons. The population has been fairly stable recently. In most age groups, men outnumber women, but the difference has lessened a fair bit in the last ten years.

When compared to 2011, the proportion of inhabitants in their thirties is rather low, the same as of inhabitants in their forties ten years later. Proportionally, a larger part is in the older age groups now than in 2011. The rate of older people is largest in Stöðvarfjörður and Breiðdalsvík. If compared to the whole country, the proportion of inhabitants aged 25–29 is lower in Fjarðabyggð than nationwide.

The main pillars of the society's economy are fishing, fish processing and aluminium production. It is fair to say that fisheries are the main industry in Fjarðabyggð,

even though Alcoa Fjarðaál is currently the largest single employer in the municipality.

Fjarðabyggð's strength lies in the proximity to some of the world's richest pelagic fishing grounds for, e.g. herring, capelin and blue whiting. Also, good fishing grounds for cod and other demersal species are close by. In Fjarðabyggð, there is much pelagic quota, thriving fisheries in small boats, trawlers, herring and capelin boats, good knowledge of fisheries and processing, skilled manpower, strong and modern fishing operators and efficient fish meal factories. Conditions for fish farming in floating marine pens are good, and fish farming has already started in Reyðarfjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður.



The largest single employer in Fjarðabyggð is Alcoa Fjarðaál. Photo: Alcoa Fjarðaál



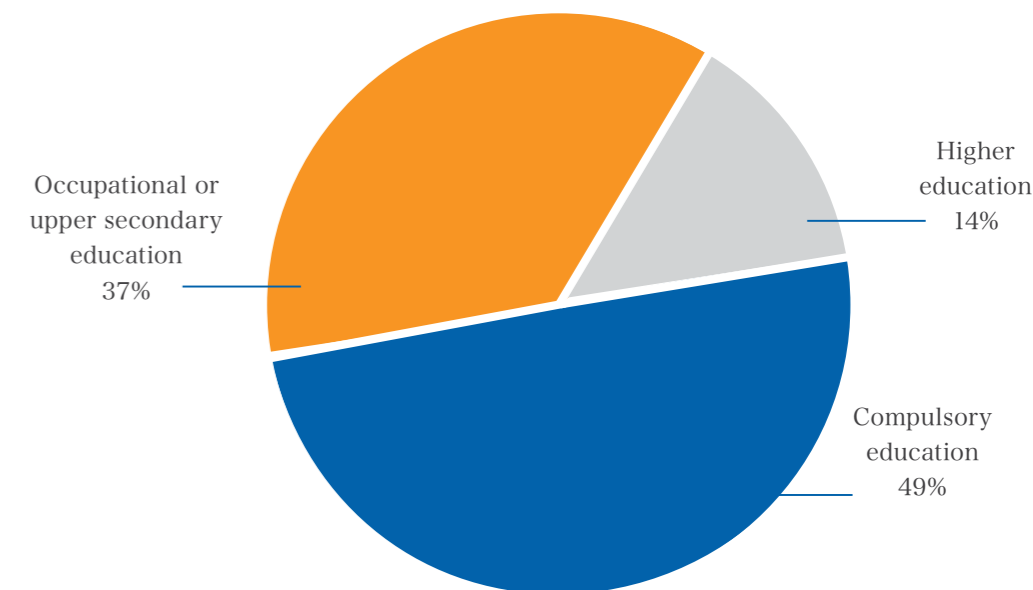
Boats unloading in the Port of Norðfjörður. Photo: Kristín Hávarðsdóttir

A fab lab workshop, a tool for innovation, is at Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands. It has computerised equipment and tools for making prototypes and creating knowledge about digital production techniques. Photo: Esther Ósp Gunnarsdóttir



## EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF WORKFORCE IN FJARÐABYGGÐ

## EDUCATION



The community's level of education was last analysed in 2013, indicating the educational level in today's workforce. In 2013, 14% of inhabitants 16 years and

older had finished a university degree and 37% had finished secondary school (final exam, vocational education or similar).

# Opportunities in Fjarðabyggð

## SOCIETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Fjarðabyggð takes pride in creating an excellent framework for economic life in the municipality. Emphasis is put on good communication with the sectors in the economy and that elected representatives are informed of economic needs in an ever-changing environment.

The experience of undergoing vast social changes in the last 15 years, in the wake of immense developments, where the community's inhabitants and institutions showed great skill for adaptation benefits the municipality Fjarðabyggð. This experience is integrated into the community that welcomes new inhabitants, businesses and investors.

Fjarðabyggð is the 10th largest municipality in Iceland and, as described in previous chapters, very diverse and powerful in regards to the economic sector. Products from fisheries, fish farming and aluminium are its foundations. Numerous jobs have also been created in derived

service industries. In addition, the area has many strong institutions, e.g. hospital and secondary school, and the Port of Fjarðabyggð is the country's largest fishing port. That means a lot of activity for the municipality, and the port is one of the few ones in the country run without government subsidies. Together, this creates a powerful unit and good foundations for the management of the municipality; employee compensations are high and average local income tax among the highest in the country.

Fjarðabyggð stands on firm grounds economically and will continue to strengthen its basic structure and infrastructure for the community to be well equipped to face the future.

Building lot availability in Fjarðabyggð is good for residential, industrial and other types of buildings. The lots are free of charge with moderate charges for municipal street construction, except in the cases where the municipality needs to construct the streets specially, then an infrastructure fee is charged. The local government is ready to revise its land-use plan if necessary.

It is worth mentioning that if people intend to build themselves residential housing, in recent years, a 50–100% discount on street construction charges has been given due to the substantial investment in street construction the last fifteen years and the municipality's vision that the infrastructure will be used by its inhabitants.

Hence, there are exciting possibilities for investors and new inhabitants to play their part in the development of the community in Fjarðabyggð.

An overview of Reyðarfjörður.  
Photo: Páll Guðmundur Ásgeirsson



Some of the country's largest fish industry companies are in Fjarðabyggð, all turning a profit for decades. The port's treasury has been used systematically for construction and reconstruction of the harbour facilities. Excellent hi-tech freezing plants and harbour-related activities are in Fjarðabyggð.

Around the sweeping and highly developed fishing industry, many opportunities for complete processing of the seafood and related service industries arise, as the fishing industry is very service demanding.

The human resources around the fishing industry in Fjarðabyggð will become even stronger in the next few years. The fourth industrial revolution has started, and technological advances in the fishing

industry will only increase. Fewer hands are needed for processing the products, with ever-increasing demand for the workforce to be able to deal with complicated tasks. Well-educated staff will play a key role in the growth of fishery companies in Fjarðabyggð in the coming years, and investment in new technology will be extensive.

Complete processing of seafood for human nutrition is growing and filled with opportunities. Research and experiments in recent years have led to new processing methods, e.g. to processing of snacks made from marine products and possible complete processing of fish oil from plankton.

The fishing industry in Fjarðabyggð is progressive and developed, infrastruc-

Gunnar Bogason working onboard Börkur NK.  
Photo: Guadalupe Laiz



## FISHING INDUSTRY AND FISH FARMING

Fish farming at Grípalda in Reyðarfjörður.  
Photo: Laxar

tures good and the fishery companies' representatives are always ready for conversation and collaboration with creative innovators and investors.

The main growth tip of the economy in East Iceland is connected to increased fish farming. Good conditions for fish farming are found in Fjarðabyggð, and the society's strong infrastructures has helped recent development in that industry. The municipality has formed a clear policy about fish-farming based on the foundations of sustainable exploitation and protection of resources in maritime and coastal areas. Also, it has written policies about land use of industrial- and operations areas around the ex-

ploitations of maritime areas and about protection for the Gerpir area.

The municipality welcomes fish farming if full caution is used and development done in line with other industries and in accordance with the vision of the inhabitants about positive development of Fjarðabyggð's society.

Licences have been issued for 65 thousand tonnes of production that could create 400 to 500 new, direct jobs, in addition to derived jobs, in the coming years. This is on par with the increase in jobs in Fjarðabyggð when the heavy industry development earlier this century took place that resulted in population growth and increased demand for service, products and housing.

Alcoa Fjarðaál's smelter in Reyðarfjörður.  
Photo: Alcoa Fjarðaál



## INDUSTRY



The municipality boasts a long history of strong industrial enterprises and decade-long vocational education in Neskaupstaður. Today, numerous industrial companies operate in the municipality in different fields and many skilled and educated craftsmen live in the area.

The largest industrial company in the municipality is Alcoa Fjarðaál in Reyðarfjörður, starting operations in 2007. The aluminium smelter is the largest in Iceland, with production capacity up

to 360 thousand tonnes of aluminium per year. It tells a certain story that the company decided to build its plant in the municipality. Even though other factors contributed, such as low energy price, other local infrastructure was also important, e.g. skilled labour force residing in the area, good transportation, stability and the community's strong institutions. An aluminium smelter of those proportions demands a lot, and many connected services have developed next to it in Fjarðabyggð in recent years.



From a carpentry lesson in Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands in Neskaupstaður.  
Photo: Esther Ósp Gunnarsdóttir

It is also worth mentioning that Fljótsdalshérað (now a part of Múlaþing) and Fjarðabyggð were chosen together as the most suitable place in Iceland to service oil exploration in the Arctic Ocean, with their airport, industrial ports, service industry, minimum natural disaster hazards and good standard of living.

Tourism has grown in Fjarðabyggð in recent years. Energetic agents have constructed ambitious companies, lodgings have grown in numbers, recreation possibilities are more varied and collaboration within the sector has grown. The number of people working in tourism all year round as their principal occupation has increased, as has professionalism.

The opportunities in tourism in the municipality are many, benefiting from the proximity to the airport in Egilsstaðir, the magnificent nature and ever-better transportation within the municipality. East Iceland has also increased its part in tourism nationwide in recent years.

A tourism policy has been written in Fjarðabyggð where the municipality's main goals are stated. The ongoing marketing of the ports of Fjarðabyggð for cruise ships is stipulated, where the port of Eskifjörður, able to welcome more ships, is pronounced as the main destination for cruise ships in Fjarðabyggð. Thousands of guests arrive on land, and it is important to ensure that they can enjoy and experience all that Fjarðabyggð has to offer, e.g. recreation, food culture, nature and heritage.

Fjarðabyggð has very diverse museums, playing an important role in the welcoming of guests. Within the museums, many opportunities exist – a more focused

marketing and, where applicable, expansion and/or renewal.

Numerous opportunities exist in connection with increased winter tourism, but the municipality sports an excellent skiing area in Oddsskarð, between Eskifjörður and Norðfjörður. The area is the largest one in East Iceland with unique pistes and routes for downhill and cross-country skiing as well as magnificent vantage points. The area offers opportunities for better use and improved service, e.g. using it during summer for practice of other sports such as mountain bike cycling.

Randulffssjöhús restaurant in Eskifjörður.  
Photo: Kolbrún Kristjánsdóttir



In recent years, year-round, full-time jobs in tourism have increased, and the professionalism is ever growing.  
Photo: Daniel Byström



Bláfell hotel in Breiðdalsvík.  
Photo: Jessica Auer



## TOURISM



From the 2019 autumn conference of The Association of municipalities in East Iceland.  
Photo: Esther Ösp Gunnarsdóttir



The municipalities in East Iceland collaborate closely together, hence creating opportunities to offer a more diverse service and utilise each town's infrastructures and strengths.

In connection to that, it is worth mentioning that Fjarðabyggð and the municipality then called Fljótsdalshérað (now Múlaþing) were together evaluated as a location for a service centre to oil exploration in the Arctic Ocean along with other locations in Iceland. They received the highest score (92 points out of 100). The areas trailing them received

83 and 57 points. The evaluations were based around harbours, airports, road transportation, industrial areas, society, service and hazards of natural disasters.

In an oversimplified way, it can be said that Fjarðabyggð become an agriculture community when Breiðdalshreppur municipality became part of Fjarðabyggð in 2018. The countryside in Breiðdalur is grassy, mountains and heaths are used for sheep grazing and it has the municipality's largest sheep farms. Breiðdalur also has two dairy farms. Locals are working with complete food processing, making interesting foodstuffs of local products, e.g., good quality beer and different type of meat products in a certified production kitchen in

Breiðdalsvík. Opportunities for forestry have also been created in Breiðdalur, and in the coming years, a foreign association will fund forestry on the farm Ormsstaðir, owned by the Icelandic Forest Service. Companies are showing increased interest in forestry, as they can lower their tax base with carbon offsets. In Breiðdalur and elsewhere in Fjarðabyggð, there is plenty of space for further forestry and carbon offset measures.



Pórrður Júlíusson runs a farm and tourist services in Skorrastaður in Norðfjörður.  
Photo: Jessica Auer

From a book making workshop during BRAS, Children's Culture Festival in East Iceland, in 2019.  
Photo: Elsa Guðný Björgvinsdóttir



Fjarðabyggð's culture history is long and prosperous. To mention a few, choirs, drama societies, bands and an art workshop have operated there for decades, though assuredly inconsistently active as these things go. Independent artists have also worked in Fjarðabyggð, and facilities for artistic work have improved a lot in recent years. A quality sound studio in the Fish Factory in Stöðvarfjörður should be mentioned, as well as other work-

shops, for use for a reasonable fee. Residencies for artists are in Stöðvarfjörður and elsewhere in the municipality, e.g. in Neskaupstaður and Eskifjörður. Without a doubt, many opportunities for people to work on their art can be found in Fjarðabyggð; the facilities are there, the surroundings in the fjords magnificent and the disturbance minimum.

Iceland has gone through awakening about personal development in recent years. Some trends have reached the region, and companies have been founded to meet that demand. Different parlours have opened for different types of physical and mental rehabilitation, e.g. family therapy, physiotherapy and chiropractic services. With increased awareness of the importance of good health, the demand for diverse resorts will grow in coming years.

Many unused opportunities lie in educational activities in the municipality. Facilities for university students to work on their final projects/papers are available. Specialised and comprehensive knowledge within certain fields will be used to operate studies in practical industrial technology in the East Iceland University branch that started in autumn 2021.



Diverse types of fitness options can be found in Fjarðabyggð. Here a yoga session is taking place on a pier in Neskaupstaður.  
Photo: Rhombie Sandoval

Múlinn, a co-op workplace, is a 900 m2 building in Neskaupstaður, once housing a convenience store, but now a diverse combination of institutions and companies, offices and laboratories.  
: Kristinn Magnússon



With advances in telecommunications technology and better general knowledge about different types of communication software, opportunities for location-independent jobs grow, and actually not much can prevent different types of jobs from thriving in the silence around the Eastfjords.

In connection to this, it is right to mention a house called *Múlinn, a co-op workplace*, in Neskaupstaður. It was specially designed and built to house an office

cluster and serves as the centre for innovation in Fjarðabyggð. Office buildings and housing can be found elsewhere in the municipality, well equipped for various types of telecommuting. Most towns have residencies and workspaces for artists, specially Stöðvarfjörður.

In the municipality inhabitants working independent of location for companies with their headquarters in the capital area or even abroad have grown in number. One of the is the computer scientist Guðmundur Harðarson.



Guðmundur Harðarson  
employee of Advania

*The teleworking has been successful after we moved east. I have facilities away outside of home, which is a key element. There I meet people working for themselves and other teleworkers; that way I can communicate directly with others, go for a coffee, chat and other such things.*

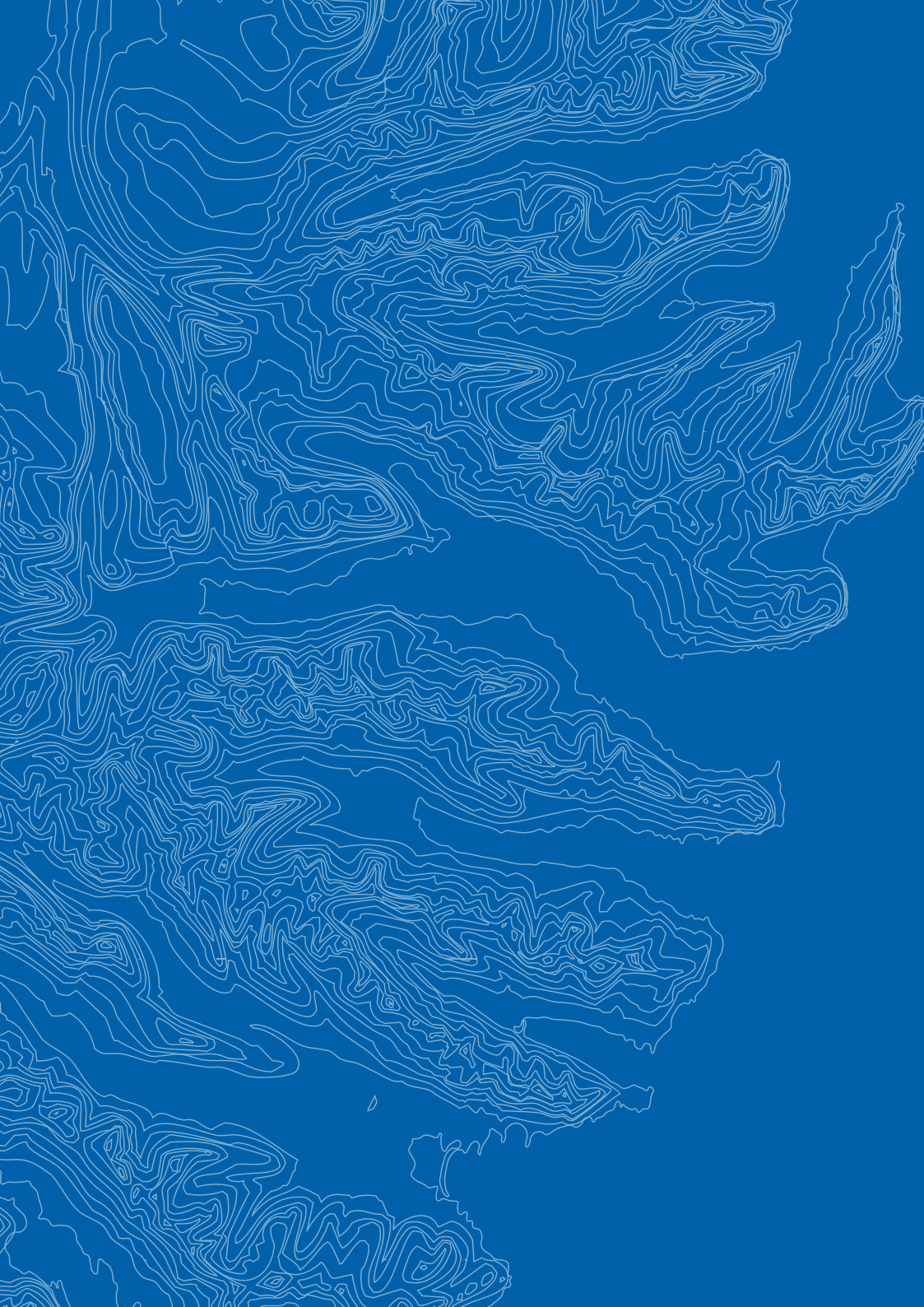
*I know about people doing "mixed" telework, i.e. living for example in Selfoss or Akranes but working in Reykjavík a few days every week. I manage all my projects here from Fáskrúðsfjörður, and it has worked really well. I can't see it changing anything if I would go south every week. It is enough for me to go a few times every year.*

*This has been a very positive change for me and my family. The housing here in the east is much cheaper than in the south, making a big difference for us. Therefore, I am sure that teleworking will be more common in the coming year; it is such a freedom to be able to choose where you live independent of the location of the company you work for.*

## Wonderful Fjarðabyggð



Photo: Alta ráðgjöf



FJARDABYGGD.IS  
VISITFJARDABYGGD.IS  
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## Further information

On Fjarðabyggð's website further information about all aspects of the society, including statistics, maps, and meeting minutes, can be found.



FJARDABYGGD



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