



The City of Reykjavik's Cultural Policy

2021 - 2030

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The City of Reykjavik's Cultural Policy 2021–2030

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Introduction

Support for culture and arts in 2021

Reykjavik's cultural policy will remain in effect until 2030. However, when looking to the future, it is important to grasp and analyse the current situation before formulating a policy for the decade ahead. The City of Reykjavik already supports culture and arts in various ways. The city runs three museums: the Reykjavik City Library, the Reykjavik Art Museum and the Reykjavik City Museum, which operate in 16 cultural centres across the city. The City of Reykjavik has also focused specifically on supporting literature and music with the special initiatives Reykjavik Music City and Reykjavik UNESCO City of Literature. In addition to this, Reykjavik supports the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre and the Reykjavik City Theatre.

A wide variety of events and festivals are held in Reykjavik each year. The City of Reykjavik holds various events, most notably the festivals Culture Night, the Winter Lights Festival, National Day celebrations on 17 June and the Children's Culture Festival. The city has established cooperation agreements, with a term of two years or more, to support 15 other festivals and concert series, and has entered into many other cooperation agreements with various cultural societies, art venues and artists' groups. Grants are awarded to independent artists and groups each year.

The City of Reykjavik's Cultural Policy

Culture and the arts involve many different segments of society. This means that various municipal departments participate in artistic and cultural projects, although the vast majority of projects are in the field of culture and tourism. These projects can be found in the Cultural Policy's action plan. Matters that concern arts and culture but fall under other municipal departments can be found in the policies of the relevant departments.

The formulation of the policy is guided by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and all actions in the action plan are defined according to them.

The Cultural Policy is Reykjavik's supreme policy regarding cultural matters. Matters of to Reykjavik Music City, Reykjavik UNESCO City of Literature and the city's cultural institutions are not included in the Cultural Policy's action plan, but can be found in the policies and operational plans of the relevant units. These policies are nevertheless sub-policies of the Cultural Policy and have the same central focus.

Terminology

In the City of Reykjavik's Cultural Policy, the terms **culture** and **arts** are used in a broad context and refer to the fields that fall under the City of Reykjavik's Department of Culture and Tourism. These include cultural heritage, art, design, architecture and events. The City of Reykjavik's employment and innovation policy is being formulated and will include discussions and definitions of **creative industries**.

The term **accessibility** is well known, but it should be noted that here, the term refers to accessibility in a broad context, i.e. not only access to buildings and transport, but also access to information and communication. The more recent term **inclusion** (translated as *inngilding* in Icelandic) refers to ensuring access for people that may otherwise have been marginalised or excluded from opportunities or resources.

Vision

The goal of the City of Reykjavik's Cultural Policy is to ensure that by 2030, all residents will have an equal opportunity to enjoy art and culture, both as creators and consumers. Reykjavik's artistic and cultural life should not be homogenous, but rather reflect the diversity of life in the city. The City of Reykjavik aims to create excellent conditions for artistic creation, making Reykjavik a city where artists will want to live and work. Reykjavik is to become known around the world as a city of culture that tourists want to visit with the sole purpose of experiencing the city's arts and culture.

All parts of the city should be a melting pot of arts and culture reflecting the unique qualities of each neighbourhood. All residents of the city should have equal opportunities to participate in and enjoy culture and art in their immediate environment.

Implementation of the policy

Cost assessment, responsibility and performance indicators

To ensure that the objectives of the Policy are achieved, a three-year action plan will also be submitted, including a cost estimate, timetable, performance indicators and responsible parties.

The Committee of Culture, Sport and Leisure is responsible for presenting a vision for the future and submitting a proposal for developing, funding and implementing actions, projects and a final assessment of results. The City Council determines the department's ultimate financial framework.

At the beginning of next year's budget preparations, the head of the department and the office director of cultural affairs will review the Cultural Policy action plan, adapt actions and create new ones, as appropriate, in consultation with the Committee of Culture, Sport and Leisure.

The Committee of Culture, Sport and Leisure approves the City of Reykjavík's Cultural Policy, as well as other policies of cultural institutions and projects within the department. The policies of institutions and individual projects must take the Cultural Policy into account and prioritise actions following the Policy's action plan.

The head of the department is responsible towards the Committee of Culture, Sport and Leisure for following the Policy and its action plan, and for ensuring that procedures and guidelines to implement the Policy are in place.

Directors of the city's cultural institutions and the department's special projects are responsible to the head of the department for incorporating the Policy's ideology into their work. Staff will follow up on the objectives by participating in actions and projects.

At the halfway point of the Policy's term, in 2025, the Policy will be reviewed in its entirety and updated as necessary. The Department of Culture and Tourism's service survey and scorecard are considered in the review of the action plan and used to measure objectives. The Cultural Policy will remain in effect until the year 2030. A new consultation process will commence in September 2028 and a new policy submitted for approval in September 2029.

In the event of changes in the administration of the City of Reykjavík's cultural affairs due to restructuring of the city's departments, the Cultural Policy and action plan must be revised immediately in terms of wording and fields of responsibility.

Lifelong inclusion and access to culture and arts for Reykjavik's residents

1. The City of Reykjavík will give all residents an opportunity to enjoy art and culture at all stages of their lives
 - 1.1. The cultural life of the city should be open to all so that everyone feels that they are part of it, have equal access and can participate on their own terms. Care will be taken to ensure that all individuals can grow, prosper and enjoy life together.
 - 1.2. The City of Reykjavik will focus especially on children's culture and on enabling all children in Reykjavik to participate in and have access to culture and art.
 - 1.3. The role of the Reykjavik City Library is to share stories, knowledge and culture. The library will promote literacy in the broadest sense, and encourage democratic participation and social innovation. Reykjavik City Library is a place to experience and form a lifelong bond with culture.
 - 1.4. Reykjavik City Museum collects, records and preserves cultural objects. The museum strives to form close bonds with the community and encourage the active participation of guests. Reykjavik City Museum conveys the city's diverse history in an attention-grabbing manner, raises awareness and is a creative and fun place to visit.

Other policies referred to: Leisure Policy, Education Policy, Reykjavik City Library Policy, Reykjavik City Museum Policy

2. Reykjavík's cultural life will reflect the diversity of life in the city

- 2.1. The City of Reykjavík will maintain an active dialogue with residents about art and culture. Particular attention will be paid to reaching people with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- 2.2. Museums and cultural centres will emphasise diversity and be ambitious in carrying out their multi-faceted role. They will be an important part of the daily life of residents and in the experience of visitors to the city.
- 2.3. There will be a focus on supporting independent cultural projects that promote diversity and the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Other policies referred to: The Green Plan

3. Culture and arts in the City of Reykjavik will be inclusive and accessible to all

- 3.1. All Reykjavik residents will have an opportunity to take part in cultural and artistic activities. The focus will be on the inclusion of everyone in society, both as creators and consumers of art.
- 3.2. Information on opportunities and support for cultural and artistic activities should be accessible to all. Events and other experiences in the city's cultural and artistic life will be visible via media that reach diverse groups.
- 3.3. The City of Reykjavik's Cultural Policy refers to the city's Human Rights Policy regarding inclusion and accessibility for all residents.

“The human rights policy is founded on the principle of equal treatment, aiming to enable all persons to enjoy basic human rights regardless of their origin, nationality, class, language, skin colour, religion, atheism or non-religious convictions, political opinions, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sexual characteristics, age, disability, body build or type, health, ability or other status.”

– The City of Reykjavik's Human Rights Policy

Other policies referred to: Human rights policy

Reykjavik - a city where artists enjoy living and working

4. Art for art's sake

- 4.1. In Reykjavik, artists should be able to express themselves freely in their art. Art is not limited to galleries and museums. It can be seen everywhere. Art can evoke various emotions and even shock people. It brings people joy and stirs them up.
- 4.2. Art is not centralised and has value in and of itself. The City of Reykjavik will create space for unexpected developments and dynamic growth in the city's arts.

5. Arts are an important industry in Reykjavik

- 5.1. The city's cultural institutions will strive to ensure that artists receive fair compensation for their work.
- 5.2. The City of Reykjavík will look for ways to ensure the permanent preservation of the cultural assets held by the city's cultural institutions.
- 5.3. The City of Reykjavik will support a professional environment for the arts by improving facilities for artists and creators. Support will be provided for artistic spaces and other cornerstones of the arts.
- 5.4. The City of Reykjavík will facilitate and increase access for artistic activities in unused premises in various parts of the city, both privately owned and municipal premises.
- 5.5. The City of Reykjavik's artist grants will promote art forms on their own terms. Special emphasis will be placed on facilitating access to grants for young artists and artists that belong to marginalised groups.
- 5.6. The City of Reykjavik will focus in particular on continued development and support for sustainable clusters where sharing is encouraged and creatives seek support from each other. The City of Reykjavik will support the arts and creative industries with a focus on developing a creative village in Gufunes.
- 5.7. Artistic and cultural activities in Reykjavik will be increased with more cooperation between cultural institutions, entities working in the field of culture and other appropriate partners.

- 5.8. Reykjavík Art Museum is a progressive and constantly evolving venue where guests are introduced to the diversity of the visual arts, both past and present. Powerful presentation, education and good services create interest in artistic creations.

Other policies referred to: Employment and Innovation Policy, the Green Plan, Reykjavik Art Museum's Policy

6. Reykjavik as an international city of art

- 6.1. Reykjavik is a city of art and will attract artists from all corners of the world.
- 6.2. The City of Reykjavik will support the city's network with the international art world. The focus will be on increasing cooperation domestically and abroad.
- 6.3. Reykjavik is a UNESCO City of Literature and will continue to support the literary arts in a broad sense, both domestically and in an international context.
- 6.4. The Reykjavik Music City project will continue to promote Reykjavik as a leading international music city and present Icelandic music as being intertwined with Reykjavik's image as a cultural city and interesting destination.

Other policies referred to: Policy for UNESCO City of Literature, Policy for Reykjavik Music City

Culture and arts in all of the city's neighbourhoods

7. Culture and arts improve the quality of life of Reykjavik's residents and are key elements of urban development

- 7.1. Arts and culture will be visible and accessible in all Reykjavik neighbourhoods.
- 7.2. Care will be taken to preserve the cultural artefacts and history of each neighbourhood, with a focus on developing an inviting environment.
- 7.3. Arts and culture will be key forces in developing Reykjavik neighbourhoods.

8. The City of Reykjavik supports a local, resident-driven neighbourhood culture

- 8.1. The activities of cultural institutions in each neighbourhood of the city will take the needs of the local community into account.
- 8.2. The development and distribution of arts and culture in every neighbourhood of the city will be supported. The City of Reykjavik will encourage creative thinking by creating a space for the unexpected and untamed in the urban environment.
- 8.3. The facilities of municipal libraries and leisure centres will be presented to residents as event spaces available to them.

Other policies referred to: Leisure Policy, the Green Plan, Reykjavik City Library Policy

9. Culture and arts are an important aspect of the city's environmental activities

- 9.1. When developing green areas, public parks and outdoor recreation areas, a space for cultural and artistic activities will always be provided. Easy access to facilities and information on how to use them will be ensured.
- 9.2. Environmental targets will be set and environmentally friendly solutions developed for the City of Reykjavik's cultural institutions and events.
- 9.3. The City of Reykjavik will educate those who receive grants for artistic and cultural activities on how they can reduce their ecological footprint and encourage them to ensure the sustainability of their activities.

Other policies referred to: The Green Plan

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