



Government of Iceland  
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture



2020-2030

# Icelandic film policy from 2020 to 2030



An art form at  
a crossroads



Government of Iceland  
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

—  
“Hey, shouldn’t we talk  
more about this?”

(The Night Watch, 2007. Director: Ragnar Bragason. Screenwriters: Jóhann Ávar  
Grimsson, Jón Gnarr, Jörundur Ragnarsson, Pétur Jóhann Sigfússon, Ragnar Bragason)

—  
“We are flowers, each in  
its own color. Flowers in  
the garden of the Lord.”

(The Garden, 2020. Screenwriter and director: Ragnar Bragason)

—  
“It’s okay, I know you’re  
pretending to be drunk.  
I noticed it immediately.  
You’re still damn good.”

(The Girls, 2005. Director: Ragnar Bragason, Óskar Jónasson. Screenwriters:  
Sigurjón Kjartansson, Margrét Örnólfsdóttir)

—  
“That’s the question,  
right?”

(The Last Autumn, 2019. Director: Yrsa Roca Fannberg. Screenwriters: Yrsa Roca  
Fannberg and Elín Agla Briem)

## Icelandic film policy from 2020 to 2030



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we are strong.”

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# Introduction

In the spring of 2019, Lilja D. Alfreðsdóttir, Iceland's Minister of Education, Science and Culture, appointed a committee of representatives from both the Icelandic government and the film industry to create a new, comprehensive policy for filmmaking and film culture in Iceland until 2030. The goal of the initiative was to set Icelandic filmmaking on a path that would allow it to continue to flourish and prosper in coming years, and by doing so to strengthen Iceland's culture, language, identity, economy, and general reputation in the world. The committee was tasked with drawing up an action plan based on the new policy, which would cover film culture, film education, the development and production of films and TV projects, and the international promotion of Iceland as a location for filming. The committee was also asked to take a close look at the existing institutions and support schemes with regard to simplifying and strengthening them, and to how filmmaking might support Iceland's goals in the areas of equality and sustainability.

Because of enormous changes occurring globally, often attributed to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there is a need for the Icelandic economy to become more diversified, with an emphasis on industries that are built upon ingenuity, technology, creativity, and sustainability. It goes without saying that filmmaking falls entirely within this framework, since it is a rapidly growing art form and industry that has the potential to bring great value and competitiveness to the Icelandic economy for years and decades to come. Because of this, this new film policy aligns perfectly with the Icelandic government's goal of promoting the creative industries.

Filmmaking has been an important feature of Icelandic culture and business over the last decade, and turnover within the industry has tripled during that time. Current laws and regulations aren't clear about the cultural, social, or economic roles that filmmaking should play, nor about how the public sector should support the industry's further growth and development. It is for these reasons and others that the government – at the suggestion of and under the leadership of the Minister of Education, Science and Culture – decided to create this first comprehensive policy in the field of filmmaking. This decision is a clear indication that the government understands and recognizes the growing role of culture, the arts, and the creative industries in Iceland.

The process of the committee was threefold: First, to listen to the input of the film industry. A number of meetings were held with prominent stakeholders within the industry, and a survey was conducted of 500 members of the industry to gather their ideas and suggestions. The committee itself met regularly with the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, and with experts from the relevant institutions in the field. Second, a focused analysis of current legislation, policies, reports, and theoretical material, both domestic and foreign, was done. This analysis, among other things, looked at a variety of policies and action plans in the fields of culture and education, and concerning the Fourth Industrial Revolution, innovation, and the marketing of Iceland abroad. Particular emphasis was placed on analyzing the economic scope of filmmaking, and this document is supported by new sta-

tistics from Statistics Iceland. Third, the new policy itself was arrived at and laid down in this document. Four clear objectives and ten specific actions were defined to ensure the systematic implementation and financing of this new vision over the next ten years. The policy is accompanied by appendices and additional data, which can be found at [www.mrn.is/kvikmyndastefna](http://www.mrn.is/kvikmyndastefna)

**“This is starting to move now.”**

(The Icelandic Dream, 2000. Screenwriter and director: Róbert Douglas)



Hera Hilmar. Life in a Fishbowl (dir. by Baldvin Z, 2014).



—  
“This was just a sleepy little village. What happened?”

(Trapped 1, 2015. Directors: Baltasar Kormákur, Börkur Sigþórsson, Baldvin Z. Óskar Þór Axelsson. Screenwriters: Sigurjón Kjartansson, Clive Bradley, Ólafur Egilsson, Jóhann Ævar Grímsson)

# Icelandic filmmaking: An art form at a crossroads

The centuries-old need of Icelanders to tell stories has sparked the creation of hundreds of Icelandic films, many of which have found their way into our hearts. As a result of the energy, determination, and vision of all of those who have worked in the field, filmmaking as both an art form and an industry has been, and is still being, developed in line with high international standards. Filmmaking in Iceland now stands at a crossroads. An increasing number of films grow out of Icelandic reality and capture the attentions of film lovers not only in Iceland but all over the world. This is an impressive achievement, and it is reflected by increasing participation of Icelandic films in prestigious international festivals and the number of nominations and awards at the international level.

The film industry, too, stands on solid footing. The annual turnover has tripled in only one decade. More than 3,000 people now work in the industry and the number of companies within the industry has doubled in the last five years. An increasing number of young people want to work in filmmaking and other creative industries, which are future-oriented, international, and sustainable. Filmmaking is also an important part of how Iceland markets itself abroad and attracts foreign tourists – as a country where culture, the arts, and creative industries are a priority. With this in mind, we can assume that increased investment in the film industry will only bring considerably more value to the economy than it does now.

We must ensure that Icelandic filmmaking is provided the best possible conditions to continue to grow and prosper. This film policy charts an ambitious but realistic path to the year 2030. Four objectives and ten

actions are set down, with the aim of strengthening the foundations of the industry in a variety of important ways. On one hand, the policy calls for various forms of support for artistic creation, film culture, film education, and film and media literacy. On the other hand, the policy calls for targeted steps to strengthen filmmaking infrastructure, make companies competitive, promote gender equality, and create a strong working environment with sustainable values. The continuing growth of the industry also necessitates increased support for film preservation, more modern forms of distribution, international networking, promotion, and presentation abroad. Greater dialogue within the film industry, and between it and the government, will ensure the successful implementation of this policy for the benefit of the entire nation.



Lilja D. Alfreðsdóttir, Minister of Education, Science and Culture



Theódór Júlíusson. Rams (dir. by Grímur Hákonarson, 2015).

—  
**“Watch your blood pressure, man!”**

(The Icelandic Shock Station, 1986. Director: Þórhildur Þorleifsdóttir. Screenwriter: Guðný Halldórsdóttir)



Steina and Woody Vasulka. The Vasulka Effect (dir. by Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdóttir, 2019).

## Objective 1: A thriving film culture

Create a thriving and diverse film culture that promotes the nation's identity and supports its language.

Filmmaking plays a very important role in culture and society. It's more accessible than most other art forms, and thus it's crucial as a means of promoting and preserving the Icelandic language, reflecting our present reality, and making our history and cultural heritage understandable. It's important that the entire Icelandic film community encourage equality of opportunity among a wide variety of social groups, both in film education and employment, such that it reflects the diversity of Icelandic society as a whole. Filmmaking combines many other art forms – storytelling, theater, music, visual art, editing, design, etc. – as well as specialized technical processing that combines all of this into one coherent piece. International developments in filmmaking are bringing rapid change to the field and need to be closely monitored. These changes bring both opportunities and challenges.

A rich, thriving film culture is created through a combination of many elements, including a diverse film output from a variety of different social groups, a vibrant market, cinema attendance, film interest and viewership, strong and healthy TV stations, education and debate, distribution and dissemination of film-related content, film festivals and events, and international collaboration and networking. This film policy calls for more support for all of these activities than has been provided before. A strong and dynamic support network that promotes the positive development of Icelandic cinema must be a priority. The existing institutions will remain in place, but an emphasis will be placed on further synergies and cooperation, in which public investment will be utilized more efficiently.

With this in mind, it is key that the methods of everyone involved in the field of filmmaking be improved, whether they be public institutions, professional guilds, or companies. Last but not least, the policy calls for an active and lively conversation about successful implementation and follow-up.

International cooperation is an important prerequisite for a flourishing film culture, but great upheavals are currently taking place in that area. There's greater demand for high-quality local content, and with new platforms and media, new methods for distributing film and TV content has emerged. The system of public support needs to be developed so that opportunities created by these changes can be better taken advantage of. And in light of these changes, emphasis must be placed on increasing coordination between different fields, such as film and television. In any event, good results will depend upon the production of local content, which emerges out of Icelandic reality and culture.

A strong film culture strengthens the nation's identity, language, culture, and economy. The field of filmmaking is exciting and attractive, especially for young and talented people. Icelandic filmmaking also plays a major role in the positive portrayal of Iceland abroad, and has attracted the interest and attention of the outside world. In coming decades, great value will be created through the production of intellectual property rooted within the unique culture of each nation. In order to stand on equal footing with the rest of the world, it's necessary to create the conditions for continued growth in Icelandic filmmaking.

**“I believe with all my heart that what I've done is right.”**

(Woman at War, 2018. Director: Benedikt Erlingsson. Screenwriters: Benedikt Erlingsson, Ólafur Egill Egilsson)



Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir. Woman at War (Benedikt Erlingsson, 2018).

## Action 1: Strengthen the funding system to support a more diverse range of films and more equality of opportunity

### a. Enhance the Icelandic Film Fund

The financial contribution to the Icelandic Film Fund will be increased, with particular emphases on screenwriting, greater diversity in the development and production of projects, short films and documentaries, artistic and historical films, and material for children and youth audiences. The Icelandic Film Fund's allocation framework will be defined in 2020 and allocated on the basis of these new criteria from the spring of 2021, which includes promoting as much gender equality as possible in filmmaking.

**Responsible parties:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Icelandic Film Centre

**Timeline:** Spring 2021

### b. Establish new investment fund for TV projects

An investment fund is a new method in the funding of culture and the creative industries in Iceland, for a new era characterized by the fast-paced development and financing process of projects. This fund will be run on the same model as the Nordisk Film & TV Fond and is intended to boost the production, sales, and distribution of scripted television series. Dividends from the reimbursement scheme will be used for further investments in this area. The fund is initially expected to invest in up to three series per year for the time being, but up to 10-12 series per year in the near future.

**Responsible parties:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Icelandic Film Centre

**Timeline:** Spring 2021

**“We’ll stand tight together and turn our backs together.”**

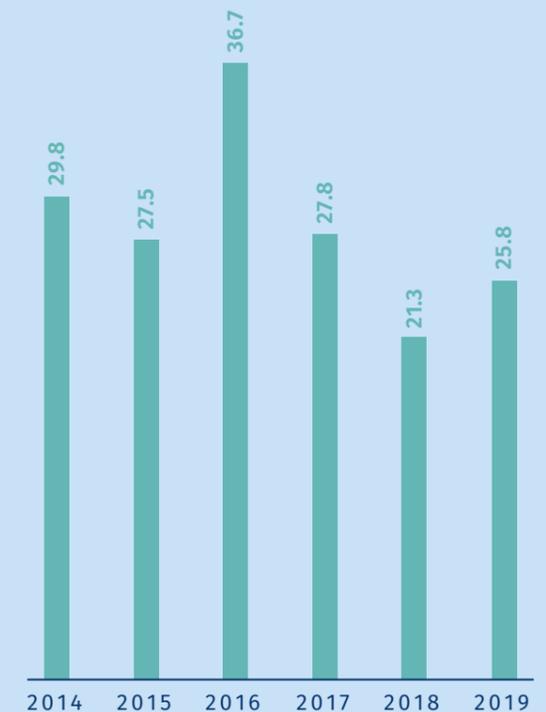
(On Top, 1982. Director: Ágúst Guðmundsson. Screenwriters: Ágúst Guðmundsson, Eggert Þorleifsson, Stuðmenn)

# Turnover

FILM AND TV INDUSTRY

# 27.2

THE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE  
IN BILLIONS ISK / NACE 59.11 AND 60



billion annual turnover  
on average NACE 59.11 and 60 2014–2019

PRODUCTION ONLY  
IN BILLIONS ISK / NACE 59.11



# 15.1

billion in export revenue  
NACE 59 and 60 2014–2018

EXPORT REVENUE  
IN BILLIONS ISK / NACE 59.11



## NUMBER OF REGISTERED COMPANIES

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
59.11.0 Film, TV, or video production	564	601	656	660	649	654
59.12.0 Film, TV, or video postproduction	12	12	12	13	14	16
59.13.0 Film, TV, or video distribution	9	9	10	9	10	10
59.14.0 Film exhibition	22	21	22	21	22	22

\* At time of publication, 1 ISK = 0.0064 EUR and 0.0077 USD.

## Action 2: Strengthen and coordinate support scheme to stimulate growth in the film industry

### a. Expand role of Icelandic Film Centre

The Icelandic Film Centre should be the heart of the public funding system for matters of Icelandic film. The IFC already plays a key role but it is proposed that its role be strengthened in accordance with the increased success and predicted growth of filmmaking. It's proposed that the IFC should be housed together with independently organized projects such as art-house cinemas and film festivals, in order to increase collaboration and efficiency in all areas. The broader role of the IFC will include the following:

- the administration of a new investment fund for TV projects
- increased cooperation and administration of funding for independently organized projects
- increased access to film heritage and other materials in collaboration with other institutions
- stronger promotional and marketing efforts abroad in line with rapid changes in the distribution environment

The IFC should facilitate conferences for film professionals and the wider society. Film and media literacy should be increased via the development of study materials at all education levels, based on foreign models. The participation of women in filmmaking should be promoted via measures to encourage female enrollment at all levels of schooling. The IFC, in collaboration with Statistics Iceland and the industry, should develop a data dashboard to disseminate film-related statistics. The IFC should also consult regularly with stakeholders and the Ministry regarding implementation of this policy, and to prepare the annual consultation between the Minister and the Film Council. Increased funding will be provided due to organizational changes and this expanded role, and for the implementation of various new projects.

**Responsible parties:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Icelandic Film Centre

**Timeline:** Spring 2021



Edda Björgvinsdóttir. Under the Tree (dir. by Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson, 2017).

### b. Broaden role of Film Council, create regular dialogue between film industry and government

More professional organizations and stakeholders, such as TV stations, should become members of the Film Council to ensure for wide-ranging, dynamic discussion both within the industry and in consultations between the Film Council and the government. The Film Council will be expected to hold an annual consultation with the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, where the implementation of film policy will be reviewed and any other issues of great importance will be discussed.

**Responsible parties:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Film Council, and the Icelandic Film Centre

**Timeline:** Spring 2021

### c. Empower National Film Archive to modernize preservation and distribution of Icelandic film heritage

The National Film Archive of Iceland should be empowered to better fulfill its statutory role, from the preservation and dissemination of film heritage to training and exhibitions for the general public. A new film database will be set up, with special attention given to updating systems related to the digital preservation and dissemination of Icelandic film heritage and author-driven work. It's critical to ensure as close cooperation as possible between the Archive and the IFC, especially concerning the database. By doing so, it will be much easier to achieve constructive coordination between these institutions in all areas and make work processes more efficient.

**Responsible parties:** The National Film Archive of Iceland in collaboration with the Icelandic Film Centre, film producers, and other stakeholders

**Timeline:** Spring 2021



Clockwise: Egill Ólafsson and Tinna Gunnlaugsdóttir. On Top (dir. by Ágúst Guðmundsson, 1982); Gunnar Eyjólfsson and Kristbjörg Kjeld, The Girl Gogo (dir. by Eric Balling, 1962); Helga Jónsdóttir. Rainbow's End (dir. by Kristín Jóhannesdóttir, 1983); Þróstur Leó Gunnarsson and Bergþóra Aradóttir. Tears of Stone (dir. by Hilmar Oddsson, 1995).

**“Do you know who you are?”**

- Who I am? Yes.**
- Who are you?**
- Ingimundur.**
- Describe yourself further.**
- I am a man.”**

(A White, White Day, 2019. Screenwriter and director: Hlynur Pálmason)

—  
“I’m going to marry this man because I love him, not to eat some fucking rhubarb jam!”

(White Night Wedding, 2008. Director: Baltasar Kormákur. Screenwriters: Ólafur Egill Egilsson, Baltasar Kormákur)



Hilmir Snær Guðnason. White Night Wedding (dir. by Baltasar Kormákur, 2008).

—  
**Action 3: Strengthen Icelandic film database and lay foundations for national streaming service**

Information about Icelandic films should be made more accessible and available in a more user-friendly manner. The database kvikmyndavefurinn.is, which is managed by the Icelandic Film Centre, provides a good foundation, but it should be strengthened considerably and public access to information about both old and new films should be improved. As a result of rapid technological progress, access to all kinds of visual material is growing and public viewing habits are changing, so it's natural to consider a national streaming service as a home for Icelandic films in the future. It's likely that before long, issues of copyright will be simplified and further clarified internationally, and that distribution regulations will be harmonized, which will make the development of such a streaming service much simpler. Funding for this project will need to be secured and cost estimates revised once proposals can be made available.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Icelandic Film Centre, and the National Film Archive of Iceland

**Timeline:** Spring 2021

—  
**Action 4: Support independently organized projects and initiatives**

The Icelandic Film Centre should nurture the operation of art-house cinemas and film festivals, and provide support to film culture through partnership agreements and grants. Support for festivals and events organized in municipalities and regions outside of the Reykjavík capital area will also be considered when such support is applied for.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Icelandic Film Centre in cooperation with independently organized projects

**Timeline:** Spring 2021



Didda Jónsdóttir. Back Soon (dir. by Sólveig Anspach, 2008).

## Objective 2: A more diverse and ambitious film education

Strengthen film and media literacy at all levels of education and establish film studies at the university level.

We live in an era of smartphones, streaming services, and other visual media that provide us with a steady flow of moving images from morning until night. The supply and accessibility of films and entertainment content have never been greater, and there is no indication that this upward trajectory will slow anytime soon. Icelandic films are in direct and fierce competition with international entertainment content for the attention of young people, and thus it is important to apply sustained focus to film education to ensure that Icelandic filmed content has as much appeal and provides a clear alternative to foreign content.

A key aspect of this film policy is the effort to promote film and media literacy among children and young people. We need to begin the systematic development of a variety of accessible study materials that can be used to improve understanding and strengthen critical thinking both in school and in the home. In this effort, we'll look to neighboring countries that have achieved remarkable results with a modern approach, where, for example, computer games and apps have been especially designed for the purpose.

Part of strengthening Icelandic filmmaking and elevating the nation's international reputation in the field is to offer a more diverse and ambitious filmmaking education domestically. This policy emphasizes the importance of providing quality film education at all levels of schooling. It's important to increase the range of courses offered at the upper secondary level with the intent of developing students' creative thinking, professionalism, daring, and independence, and strengthening their sense of responsibility toward their own studies and futures. High-quality, specialized studies in upper secondary schools, in which the range of courses in both practical and artistic disciplines is diverse, will prepare young people for further studies and create opportunities for them to work in this growing field.

It's urgent that we establish ambitious, high-quality film education at the university level so that filmmaking is put on an equal footing with the other artistic disciplines in this regard. Such an education would strengthen the artistic independence of Icelandic filmmaking, add to professional discourse, and attract new talent. A strong academic community at the university level will also strengthen scholarship and research in the field and increase the share of film in the country's artistic and cultural heritage.



Ragnhildur Gísladóttir. Honour of the House (dir. by Guðný Halldórsdóttir, 1999).

—  
**“I have five university degrees.”**

(The Night Watch, 2007. Director: Ragnar Bragason. Screenwriters: Jóhann Ávar Grímsson, Jón Gnarr, Jörundur Ragnarsson, Pétur Jóhann Sigfússon, Ragnar Bragason)



Jón Gnarr. Mr. Bjarne (dir. by Ragnar Bragason, 2009).

## Action 5: Increase availability of film education, especially film and media literacy, at all levels of education

### a. Promote critical thinking and creativity through better film and media literacy

Digital study materials, based on foreign models, will be developed to promote film and media literacy at all education levels. Costs will include translating the study materials for both teachers and students and fitting them to the domestic environment.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Icelandic Film Centre, the Directorate of Education, and preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools  
**Timeline:** 2021

### b. Create more specialized and flexible education at upper secondary level

Programs in filmmaking will be offered at most secondary schools, the promotion of film programs and courses will be heightened within the school system, and such programs aligned among various schools.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Icelandic Film Centre, the Directorate of Education, and preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools  
**Timeline:** 2021

### c. Establish university-level film education

An important part of growing filmmaking in Iceland is establishing film education at the university level, to put filmmaking on the same footing as other artistic disciplines in this regard, as soon as possible. Preparations should begin for studies at the BA level with the later possibility of developing studies at the MA level.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Education, Science and Culture  
**Timeline:** Autumn 2021



Ploey: You Never Fly Alone (dir. by Árni Ólafur Ásgeirsson, 2018).

# Workforce

ALL EMPLOYEES NACE 59 & 60



**1,806**  
employees per month

on average NACE 59 and 60 2014–2019

PRIMARY OCCUPATION NACE 59 & 60



**1,189**  
salaried employees

on average NACE 59 and 60 2014–2019

SECONDARY OCCUPATION NACE 59 & 60



% OF SALARIED / CONTRACTED EMPLOYEES



A 2006 report from the Institute of Economic Studies at the University of Iceland estimated the employment multiplier for filmmaking to be 2.9. For each job in filmmaking, 1.9 jobs are created elsewhere. This means that filmmaking will have created 3,431 jobs on average in the years 2014–2019.

**618**  
contractors

on average NACE 59 and 69 2014–2019

**Salaried employees:** Annual average of employees per month.  
**Contractors:** All those who have income from the film industry for at least one month per year.  
**Workplace survey:** Annual average of those employed in the film industry, according to Statistics Iceland's labor market research.

\* At time of publication, 1 ISK = 0.0064 EUR and 0.0077 USD.

## Objective 3: A stronger competitive position and a better working environment

The competitive position and development of Icelandic filmmaking rest upon the foundations of artistic creation, ingenuity, technology, and sustainability.

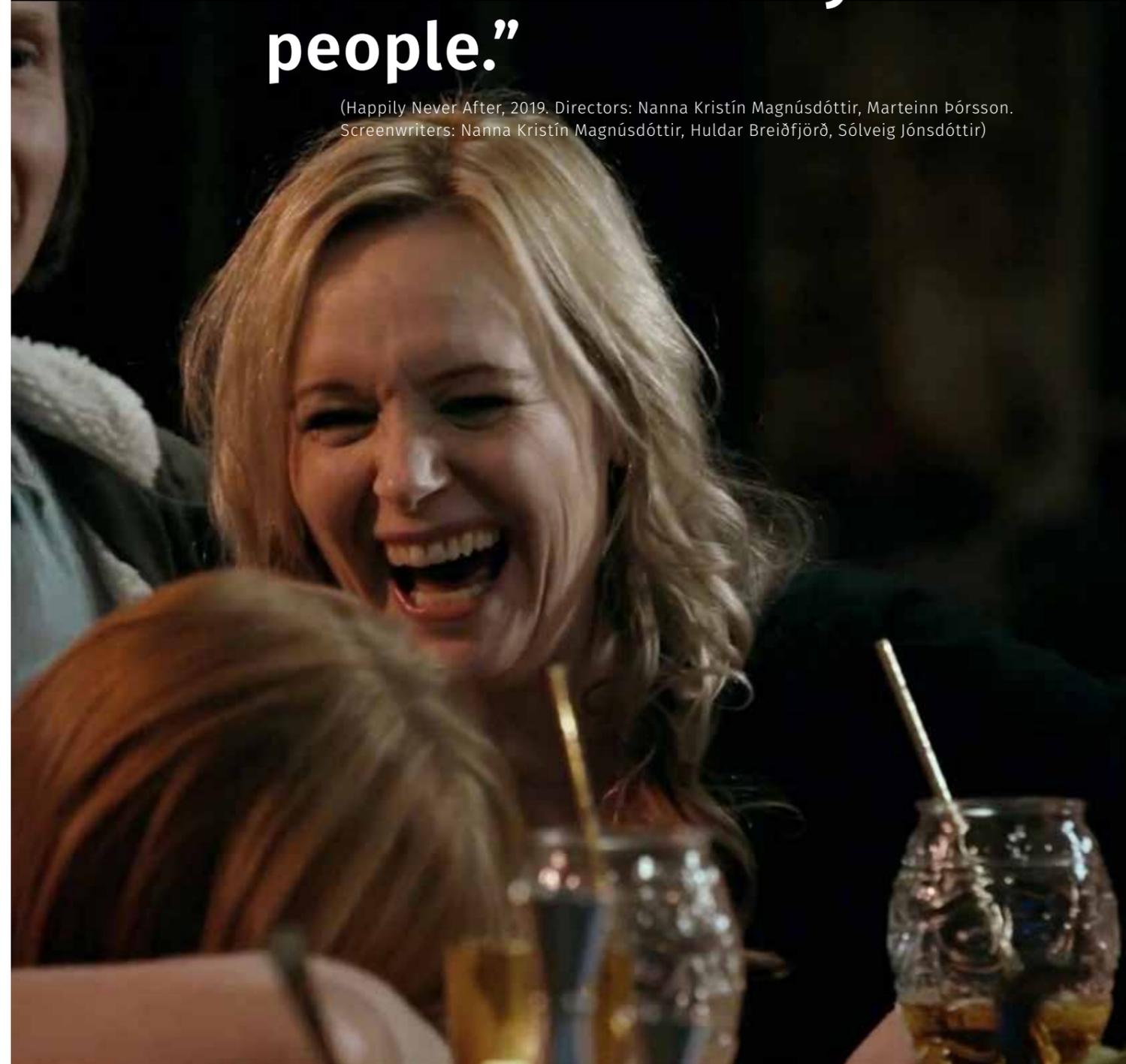
Filmmaking is a lucrative, environmentally friendly, and enterprising field that fits well with the Icelandic government's emphasis on building an economy for the future.

The film policy calls for even more attention to be placed on supporting the development of a strong, flexible, and family-friendly work environment, and a competitive film industry guided by the notions of sustainability and equality. Filmmaking already returns considerable cultural and economic value to society. Turnover averages 27 billion ISK (roughly 172 million EUR at time of writing) per year and the industry employs thousands of Icelanders. Opportunities for further growth within the industry are great and industry leaders believe activity could increase fivefold within the next three to five years. Export revenues were around 15 billion ISK (roughly 96 million EUR) from 2014–18, not counting indirect impacts on tourism and other related fields.

A solid infrastructure and strong incentives will be critical for the development of the industry in coming years. The most important factors will be continued public support to filmmaking through a robust funding system and competitive incentives, including the current reimbursement scheme. This policy calls for measures to strengthen the working environment and make the field attractive for both established and emerging talents. It's important for the industry to adopt sustainable values, and that notions of social responsibility, family-friendly values, and equality of opportunity are held in the highest regard. Part of strengthening the work environment in the industry is to ensure that film artists be given the opportunity to create, as is done in other artistic disciplines. This policy emphasizes that both government and industry should work strongly together, as in other fields. Iceland already has an effective reimbursement system, but factors such as exchange-rate fluctuation, distance from other countries, weather, and limited daylight work against Iceland's competitive position in the field. Such challenges need to be addressed through targeted measures to ensure the successful development of the industry. These measures must be based on statistical research and analysis, which is a prerequisite for creating a better understanding of the role filmmaking plays in Iceland.

—  
“I mean, who goes to the cinema alone. Only sad people.”

(Happily Never After, 2019. Directors: Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir, Marteinn Þórsson. Screenwriters: Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir, Huldar Breiðfjörð, Sólveig Jónsdóttir)



Nanna Kristín Magnúsdóttir (Happily Never After, 2019).

## Action 6: Strengthen reimbursement scheme and develop tax incentives

### a. Strengthen reimbursement scheme

Iceland's existing reimbursement scheme is already considered to be easy to use, efficient, and reliable, but it also needs to be able to remain competitive. The scheme is very important for the Icelandic film industry. The aim will be to preserve what's good about it, i.e. what's working well, while at the same time to develop it in such a way so that it can stand up to international competition at any given point in time. Incentives such as incremental reimbursements tied to the number of elements done by a project in Iceland will be considered. Thus, film studios could be further developed and projects that neighboring markets cannot handle could be handled in Iceland instead. The presence of international filmmakers would bring increased knowledge and skills to both Icelandic professionals and students. The reimbursement scheme should always be accounted for in the state budget. Procedures need to be implemented where the amount to be reimbursed can be estimated in real time, since it's difficult to know in advance which projects will end up shooting in Iceland. The various impacts of changes to the reimbursement scheme, exchange-rate fluctuations, creating a year-round filming environment, and other matters will be considered.

**Responsible parties:** A working group under the auspices of the Ministry of Industries and Innovation

**Timeline:** Spring 2021



Ágústa Eva Erlendsdóttir and Ólafur Darri Ólafsson. Country Wedding (dir. by Valdís Óskarsdóttir, 2008).

### b. Develop tax incentives to stimulate production

A wider variety of incentives should be introduced, including tax breaks for both individuals and companies that invest in Icelandic film projects. Private investment is an important part of film production and it's necessary to encourage it. Note that the proposed bill on tax incentives to support third-sector and cultural activities should ensure the best possible concessions for filmmaking. Under current legislation, both companies and individuals can request tax incentives to meet investments in certain circumstances.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Icelandic Film Centre, and Iceland's professional filmmaking guilds

**Timeline:** Bill presented during autumn 2020 session of parliament

## Action 7: Develop film clusters

There are plenty of opportunities for growth in the domestic industry through collaboration between companies, but value can also be created by collaborating with other industries, most notably tourism. The development of film clusters, which are likely to add further value and overall international competitiveness, should be supported.

**Responsible parties:** Film companies, organizations, and professional guilds in collaboration with the relevant ministry and the Icelandic Film Centre

**Timeline:** Spring 2021

## Action 8: Improve economic indicators and availability of statistics

An information website – or data dashboard – should be developed to provide statistics and key performance indicators for the industry as needed. Key figures concerning turnover, productions, revenues, the number of companies, and export revenue, all broken down by gender, will be published and updated on a regular basis. The purpose of the dashboard is to increase understanding about the economic impacts and profitability of the Icelandic film industry. The costs of this effort will involve the development, operation, and maintenance of the website/dashboard.

**Responsible parties:** The Icelandic Film Centre in consultation with Statistics Iceland and the professional filmmaking guilds

**Timeline:** Before the end of 2021

# “Should this be a fun trip or are we bringing the women?”

(The Men’s Choir, 1992. Screenwriter and director: Guðný Halldórsdóttir)



Hilmir Snær Guðnason and Jóhann Sigurðarson. The Last Fishing Trip (dir. by Þorkell Harðarson and Örn Marínó Arnarson, 2020).

## Action 9: Create a strong and flexible working environment

### a. Encourage family-friendly filmmaking

The government and industry will work together on targeted, progressive measures that promote a more family-friendly working environment for filmmakers. A committee will be established to develop specific actions to be taken, in consultation with all stakeholders, for example at industry-wide meetings or conferences.

**Responsible parties:** The Icelandic Film Centre and the professional filmmaking guilds  
**Timeline:** 2021

### b. Promote brand and competitive position through sustainable filmmaking

Companies will be encouraged to sign a declaration on sustainable development, including environmental and social best practices and good governance. Companies will be able to register their goals and achievements annually in the data dashboard (see above). By doing so, Iceland’s filmmakers will be able to support the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and Iceland’s efforts to promote itself under the banner of sustainability. A committee should be set up to develop a “Declaration on Sustainable Filmmaking,” which will establish goals for companies, organizations, and individuals in the film community.

**Responsible parties:** The professional filmmaking guilds and production companies in collaboration with the Icelandic Film Centre  
**Timeline:** 2021

### c. Create wage fund for screenwriters and directors

A new wage fund for screenwriters and directors will be established, which will enable them to apply for artists’ salaries, as in other artistic disciplines. The ultimate size of the fund will need to be assessed, but it should be 70 months salary per year to begin with. To compare, the designers’ salary fund is 50 months per year and the theater performers’ fund is 190 months per year. The aim is for this fund to be included in a bill concerning artists’ salaries, which is expected to be submitted to parliament next year.

**Responsible parties:** Ministry of Education, Science and Culture  
**Timeline:** End of 2021



Sólveig Arnarsdóttir. Ingaló (dir. by Ásdís Thoroddsen, 1992).

## Objective 4: A well-known international brand

Filmmaking in Iceland should be noticed for its artistic quality and strong stories in which Icelandic reality reflects universal human values. The brand of Icelandic filmmaking should be built upon the development of Iceland as a year-round location and targeted promotion abroad.

International competition in the field of filmmaking is growing and new methods are needed to continue to capture the international audience's attention. At the same time, new opportunities have opened up for content to flow more freely between different language and cultural areas, and the entire world has become one stage where people have become more enthusiastic and receptive than ever before to enjoy film and TV content from all over the world, and in any language. Iceland's reputation as a film nation depends upon the interplay of several factors that need to be nurtured further in coming years. Artistic freedom and the original creation of a wide variety of high-quality film and TV content is the foundation upon which everything else rests. This creation enriches and brings great value to the community, and creates a positive image of Iceland as a film nation. There's also great need to work in a more focused and systematic manner to strengthen the position of Icelandic film and TV in the international marketplace. In this regard, some of the most important factors to emphasize are:

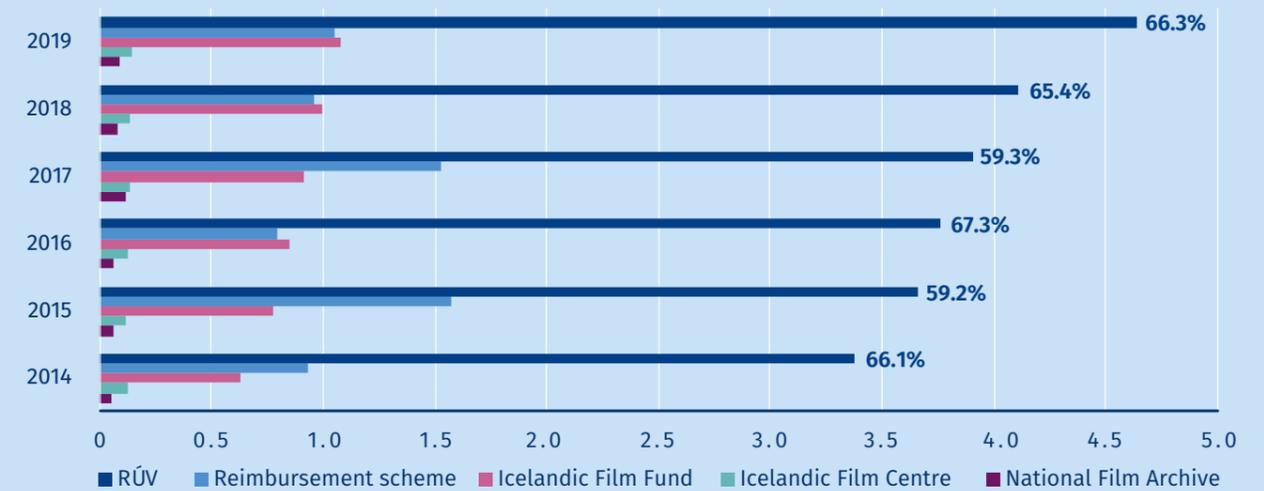
- natural beauty and variety of landscapes
- proximity to major markets
- strong competitive infrastructure and incentives in production, distribution, and marketing
- continued development as a year-round shooting location and active industry
- and, last but not least, development of a flexible, family-friendly working environment with an increased emphasis on sustainable development and equality

The foundation for the promotion, distribution, and sales of Icelandic film and TV content is laid at international film festivals, markets, and other events. Icelandic films participate in around 200–300 festivals per year and win around 70 international awards each year. This film policy calls for even further efforts to be made in the areas of international collaboration, networking, and promotions. Further success abroad will come from more targeted forays by film and TV content into the market and more dynamic and coordinated activities from the entire support network of the industry.

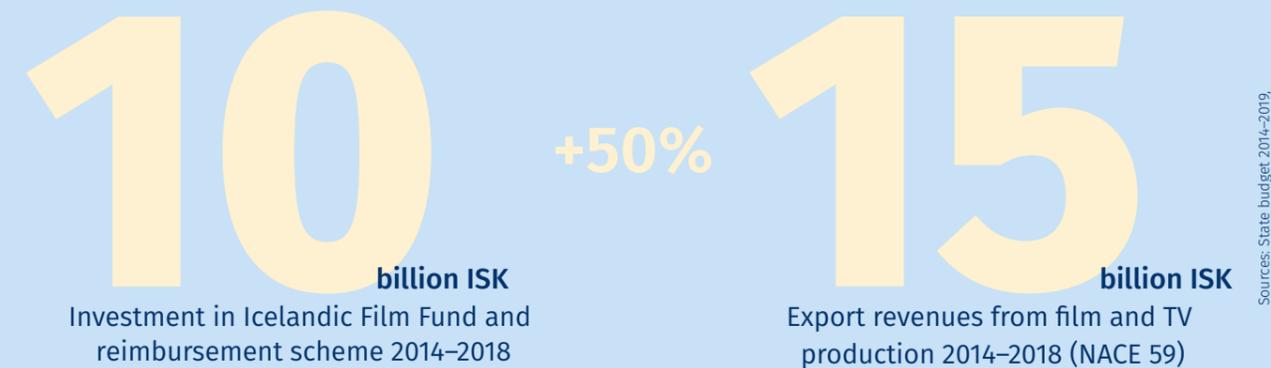
# Public investment

FILM AND TV INDUSTRY

FILM AND TV INDUSTRY – IN BILLIONS ISK



Sources: State budget 2014–2019, Icelandic Film Centre



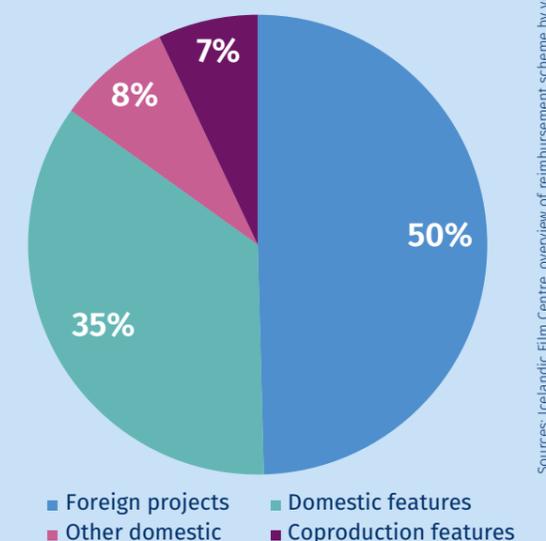
Sources: State budget 2014–2019, Icelandic Film Centre, and Statistics Iceland

FILM PRODUCTION AND PERCENTAGE OF REIMBURSEMENT SCHEME IN TURNOVER



Sources: Statistics Iceland and Icelandic Film Centre

ALLOCATION OF REIMBURSEMENT SCHEME 2014–2019



Sources: Icelandic Film Centre, overview of reimbursement scheme by year

\* At time of publication, 1 ISK = 0.0064 EUR and 0.0077 USD.



—  
“I can’t be here any longer.  
I’m suffocating.”

(Agnes Joy, 2019. Director: Silja Hauksdóttir. Screenwriters: Silja Hauksdóttir, Rannveig Jónsdóttir, Jóhanna Friðrika Sæmundsdóttir)

## Action 10: Create targeted international campaign based upon storytelling traditions, sustainable filmmaking, and year-round filming

### a. Create a sustained international campaign

The promotion of Icelandic film and TV production at prestigious foreign festivals and events needs to be further strengthened. More emphasis will be placed on the further development of an international network that is of great value to Icelandic filmmakers. Support for such activities needs to be raised, specifically through more promotional and travel grants from the Icelandic Film Fund for projects and filmmakers who are invited to participate in prestigious festivals and events. This is based on a realistic assessment of a pressing need that the Icelandic Film Fund has not been in a position to meet. Government ministers have invested a considerable amount in promoting individual film projects, but this measure aims to significantly reduce the need for special contributions of this kind.

**Responsible parties:** The Icelandic Film Centre in collaboration with Film in Iceland, the Foreign Service, and the film industry

**Timeline:** Spring 2021

### b. Connect the notions of sustainability and year-round filming

The aim is to continue promoting Iceland as a year-round shooting location through Film in Iceland and other partners. Part of building such a brand is that conditions and infrastructure need to meet the expectations of foreign production companies and enable them to work in Iceland year-round. We should aim to systematically develop a film industry based on values of sustainability, social responsibility, and equality. Marketing of filmmaking must be in line with, and support, the long-term strategy of Film in Iceland and its partners, with emphasis placed on promoting Iceland as a nation of ingenuity, sustainability, and the cultural and creative industries.

**Responsible parties:** Film in Iceland in collaboration with the Icelandic Film Centre, the film industry, and the Foreign Service

**Timeline:** From January 2021



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“To the girls, to the women, to the mothers, to the daughters who hear the music bubbling within – please speak up. We need to hear your voices.”

Hildur Guðnadóttir accepting her Oscar for her score for Joker (dir. by Todd Phillips, 2019).



Björk receives the award for Best Actress at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival for her performance in *Dancer in the Dark*.



Erna Kanema. Kanema's Song (dir. by Anna Þóra Steinþórsdóttir, 2018).

—  
“Is this also a part of the program?”

(The Icelandic Shock Station, 1986. Director: Þórhildur Þorleifsdóttir. Screenwriter: Guðný Halldórsdóttir)

—  
“How do you like Iceland? – Very strange country.”

(Cold Fever, 1995. Director: Friðrik Þór Friðriksson. Screenwriters: Jim Stark, Friðrik Þór Friðriksson)



Keli. A Mother's Courage (dir. by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson, 2009).

—  
“Iceland looks like someone spit on the map.”

(Noi the Albino, 2003. Screenwriter and director: Dagur Kári)

Icelandic film policy from 2020 to 2030  
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