

# ISLAND.IS

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Author: Fjóla Agnarsdóttir, Prime Minister's Office, Iceland

The service provider [www.island.is](http://www.island.is) will provide comprehensive information on the services of state and local authorities in Iceland. For clarification, it should be noted that Icelanders spell the name of their country "Island" (or actually "Ísland" when using full Icelandic characters), and pronounce the first two letters of the name in the same way as all of the letters following the "p" in "peace" or "piece". Every interactive service offered by government bodies at any one time will be available at island.is - and the number of these services is expected to grow rapidly. This website will serve as an addition to other publicly-run sites, since its purpose is to offer the public and businesses an easy guide throughout the entire government complex. A joint project of state ministries and organisations with local governments, island.is is one of the most important initiatives in the *Policy of the Government of Iceland on the Information Society, 2004-2007*. It is the Prime Minister's Office which supervises construction of the website.

## Goals

The goals of island.is are to improve and increase the accessibility of public services, lower the cost for whoever needs them, and add to their quality. Therefore, those expected to use this service provider will actually be all those communicating with an official body, whether these be individuals or companies.

Experience has shown that businesses and the public will utilise whatever electronic services actually save them time and money. As Icelanders have wholeheartedly welcomed such options as buying airline tickets, filing tax reports and completing bank business on the Internet, the opportunities for island.is are clearly great.

## Stages and time frame

Due to its enormous dimensions, this undertaking has been divided into three main stages:

1. Information portal
2. Services portal, including added interactivity and automatic handling
3. Individually adapted services portal, called "My Government Activities"

While work on these stages will to some extent proceed simultaneously, plans call for the first version of island.is to consist mainly of an information portal. On the other hand, this portal will direct users to e-services already on offer, such as forms provided on websites of Government bodies for subject areas that the portal covers. Even now, a total of over 2,000 forms can be located on local and state government websites. The plan is to open island.is during the first half of 2007 and to have the first phase of the project complete by then. However, it is important to realise that island.is is a long-term undertaking that will be subject to constant development, applying the newest technology and methods at each point.

The objective in the second version is greater service to the public, with plans to increase significantly the possibility of interactivity and of self-service. Among the many advantages involved, the following might be mentioned:

- no need to fill out long applications, or rush between offices
- 24-hour opening times, no waiting behind other customers
- no need to repeat information which public bodies already have
- faster, more secure service
- applications can be sent directly through the Internet.

One target of the third version is to provide a "My Pages" section where users can find information especially relating to them.

There are a number of support mechanisms connected with island.is, including electronic identification, e-payments, a communication layer, and interactive communication through forms; in order to allow users to access services themselves on the Internet, these four features have to be available. The communication layer will make it easy for public bodies to exchange data in a standardised but at the same time simple and secure manner. As for forms, the idea is to arrange a standardised platform or environment which national institutions and local authorities can access and utilise at relatively small cost.

## Subject areas

The website island.is will present a cornucopia of information, categorised by subject area. Searches should be easy; for example, a person wanting to find information on rent subsidies at island.is will not need to know at the outset what agency or municipality is responsible for those matters. Rather, s/he will be able to select searches by key words or subject areas, as well as open searches through a powerful search engine.

The initial stage of the website is expected to contain the following subject areas:

- Business
- Residence/the home
- Senior years
- Travel and transport
- Finances
- Family
- Health
- Immigrants
- Culture and society
- Education
- Consumer issues
- Invalids/the disabled

To give an insight into how information is presented, examples are shown below of passages on a page that will give advice on moving house within Iceland. Note, however, that this is only draft text, not yet finalised.

### **Moving house within Iceland**

- *Upon moving from any residence to another, either between municipalities or to a different region of the country, individuals or families are required by law to notify the National Population Register or the concerned municipality within seven days of moving.*

*Since it is only periodically that numerous agencies, companies and social organisations update their files with data from the National Population Register, it is important for people to report they have moved as soon as possible, keeping in mind that it varies how often businesses and organisations carry out this updating.*

- ***Checklist when moving:***

- *Report your new legal domicile to the National Population Register. The form "Notification of Change of Address" is on the National Registry website and can also be obtained from the office of the National Registry or local municipality, as well as from police stations.*
- *If children and young people need to change preschools or compulsory schools, this transfer must be announced to the former school and an application submitted for admission to the new school.*
- *Have your meters read for any power or electricity and for any hot and cold water which must be bought. Meter readings can be transmitted electronically to some utility companies; otherwise, contact their offices to order readings and announce the change in customers.*
- *Report your new address to Iceland Post.*
- *Find out what health care centre or health care institution operates in the area you are moving to. Report yourself and your family and apply for a general practitioner.*
- *Home phone numbers can be transferred to anywhere within Iceland; further information is available at phone company websites and service centres.*
- *Consider whether your household belongings should be insured while being moved to a new place.*
- *Notify foreign companies, private organisations and others to whom your move matters.*

- *Municipalities have websites providing information on public administration and other general information about the municipality. Information on job vacancies, vocational training courses and unemployment benefits can be found at local employment agencies*

*of the Directorate of Labour.*

*Links:*

*"Notification of Change of Address" form for the National Registry*

*Preschools*

*Compulsory schools*

*Local authorities*

*Utility companies*

*Iceland Post*

*Directorate of Labour - local employment agencies*

## Summary

As stated above, island.is is an extensive, long-term project which has also involved lengthy preparation. It will be a major step towards fulfilling the needs of the public and of businesses for accessibility to public services. Those who are interested are referred to the following information and service providers in foreign countries:

- [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)
- [www.suomi.fi](http://www.suomi.fi)
- [www.norge.no](http://www.norge.no)
- [www.danmark.dk](http://www.danmark.dk)
- [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)
- [www.sverige.se](http://www.sverige.se)

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