



Iceland



Country Overview:

Location: Northern Europe, island between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, northwest of the United Kingdom

Size: 103,000 sq. km

Population: 315,281 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Reykjavik

Exports-commodities: fish and fish products 40%, aluminum, animal products, ferrosilicon, and diatomite

Imports-commodities: machinery and equipment, petroleum products, foodstuffs, and textiles

Currency: Icelandic Kronur (ISK)

Ethnic groups: homogenous descendants of Norse and Celts 94%, population of foreign origin 6%

Religion: Lutheran Church of Iceland (official) 80.7%, Roman Catholic 2.5%, Reykjavik Free Church 2.4%, Hafnarfjorour Free Church 1.6%, other religions 3.6%, unaffiliated 3%, other or unspecified 6.2%

Government type: Constitutional Republic

Chief of State: President Olafur Ragnar GRIMSSON (since 1 August 1996)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Johanna SIGURDARDOTTIR (since 1 February 2009)

Language: Icelandic, English, Nordic Languages, German widely spoken



Republic of Iceland / Lydveldid Island

Meetings and Negotiations

- The handshake is the traditional form of greeting both at the start and completion of meetings.
- Ensure that you shake hands with **all** meeting attendees and that this is coupled with good eye contact as well as a firm handshake.
- Remain standing until invited to sit down or others do so.
- It is **common** practice to exchange business cards when you meet hosts for the first time.
- You should ensure that appointments are made in advance and that you state the intended meeting time using the **24-hour clock** as to avoid potential misunderstandings.
- Individuals in Iceland place great value on punctuality and for this reason it is **strongly advised** that you contact your respective meeting host if you are likely to be late.
- Always** arrive in advance of the

- start time so as to be able to participate at the agreed start time.
- Ensure supporting information used during the meeting is **precise** and to the point with relevant data included where necessary.
- Avoid** setting false expectations or making promises that you cannot keep as honesty is highly respected in Iceland.

Business Attire

- Individuals take great care in their appearance.
- It is expected that you should dress **smartly** for any formal occasion.
- An informal social event like a business dinner calls for a suit.

Behavior

- Members of Icelandic society expect hierarchies to be democratic.
- People relate more as **equals** regardless of formal positions.
- It is normal for individuals in

- Iceland to be quite reserved, informal, and direct in their speech which should **not** be taken offensively.
- If unsure how to behave, mimic the behavior of others.

Gift Giving

- Visitors are often invited into homes (especially if on business), and bringing a gift for the **host** is the norm.
- Although Icelanders have operated domestic wineries for more than 1,000 years, they always appreciate a bottle of foreign wine.

Appropriate Gifts:

- send flowers to the hostess **in advance** if being entertained in their home
- you may also bring chocolates, wine, pastries, or liquor

Gifts to Avoid

- Knives, as they represent the severing of ties

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- Establishing a **friendly** and **personal** relationship is a good way to do business.
- Business dinners are the preferred form of entertainment.
- It is considered appropriate to talk business over a meal.

- English is **widely** spoken in business; most Icelanders doing business in a particular field will understand the relevant English technical documentation.
- When addressing Icelanders formally, **use** either their first name or their whole name, **never** use their last name preceded by only a social title.

Topics to Discuss:

- many find it interesting to discuss Icelandic holiday traditions

Topics to Avoid:

- avoid **generalizations** regarding history and culture of Scandinavian countries