

# Country profile 2026: Iceland

## Introduction

Iceland’s digital landscape is characterised by a high-quality infrastructure and a business-friendly environment, though it faces significant challenges regarding human capital and specialised skills. Iceland is a European leader in fibre-optic deployment, maintaining a penetration rate near 80%, and has successfully extended 5G coverage to half of its population. Economically, Iceland benefits from strong institutional quality and robust intellectual property protection (OECD 2021). While business R&D expenditure is well above the EU average, the proportion of ICT specialists in the workforce is notably low, performing at only 79.6% of the EU average. This skills gap extends to the education system; despite having adequate digital devices in schools, teachers often lack the pedagogical and technical expertise to integrate them effectively. Furthermore, PISA results indicate a lack of core competencies among students, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds, and STEM graduation rates remain below the OECD average. The government has implemented forward-looking policies, such as the "Innovative Iceland" policy and an AI Action Plan (2025–2027), both focused on ethical and transparent use in the public sector. These initiatives, along with a 15-year National Cybersecurity Strategy, aim to modernise public services, safeguard critical infrastructure, and foster a digitally-enabled workforce to ensure long-term economic resilience and social inclusion.

## BIK policies

### Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching goals that shape policies for a better internet for kids.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Policy priority		X		

Integrated policy	X
Influence of the BIK+ strategy	X
Recognition of children's rights	X

*Table 1: Policy frameworks - Iceland*

- ***This topic is an important and emerging policy priority*** partially covered in national/regional laws, regulations and policies.
- ***There are separate, dedicated policies which address the topic of children and the digital environment (protection, empowerment, and participation).***
- ***The BIK+ strategy is an important influence on policy development*** on children and the digital environment.
- ***Children's rights in relation to the digital environment are an important and emerging policy priority***, with specific policies in development on this topic.

### ***Key developments and policy frameworks***

- Children and the digital environment are high on the agenda in Iceland, as elsewhere currently. Iceland has implemented the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national legislation. Therefore, it is under the influence of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment.
- Two documents are under deliberation in parliament: **a bill proposal from the minister of education and children**, which would allow the minister to make rules in secondary legislation on the use of phones and smart devices in schools and leisure centres. The other is **a parliamentary resolution proposal** where it is proposed that the minister will put in place preparation for the raising of the minimum age to use social media up to 15 or 16 years, and to put in place stricter laws on the protection of minors from advertising on social media and other digital platforms,

with a special emphasis on preventing the use of personal information of children for marketing purposes.

- Funding for the Safer Internet Centre has been secured for 2026, which is a strong statement about media literacy and online child protection as priorities. [Netvis \(Safer Internet Centre in Iceland\)](#) promotes the BIK+ strategy in Iceland, and it has influenced practice and emerging policies. Netvis staff actively advocate for the BIK+ strategy (or its components) to be included in policies, laws, and practices across society.

## Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating those policies.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Regular data collection	X			
Data on risks, harms, well-being	X			
Information systems	X			
National research fund		X		
Monitoring and evaluation		X		

Table 2: Policy design - Iceland

- **There is a regular (e.g., annual or bi-annual) nationally representative survey** specifically focused on children’s digital activity, which informs national policies on BIK topics.
- **Regular (e.g., annual or bi-annual) surveys** include measures of children’s experiences of risks, harms and digital well-being.
- **Systems are in place at the government level** to gather information on children and the digital environment.
- **Existing regular national research funding is available for research on children and the digital environment, but this is not explicitly specified.**

- **Policies are regularly monitored and evaluated**, but not always systematically.

### Key national research studies:

- The **Children and Media Survey** was conducted again in Q3 2025 and continues to inform Icelandic policy on Children and safe internet use. Funding for a survey to collect information from parents connected to children and the digital environment has been secured for next year.
- There have been some working groups in place, looking at phone use in schools, for example, and this year there was a group dedicated to the **European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025** (Council of Europe).

### Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery and coordination.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Lead ministry for policy development		X		
National coordination body	X			
National action plan or strategy	X			

Table 3: Policy governance - Iceland

- **Policy development sits across different ministries** with leadership officially distributed according to the area of specialisation.
- **A clearly defined, formal coordination mechanism exists** (e.g., task force, steering committee) with a clear mandate. It systematically engages all relevant stakeholders and ensures coherent, cross-cutting policy development and implementation related to children and the digital environment.
- **There is a defined national action plan** on children and the digital environment with accountabilities such as defined timelines, assigned responsibilities or key performance indicators (KPIs).

## Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum		X		
Public consultation on BIK topics	X			
Youth involvement in policy		X		

*Table 4: Stakeholder involvement - Iceland*

- **Stakeholders are involved through various existing groups or platforms** across different government branches. While opportunities for engagement exist, they are not centrally coordinated, and stakeholder participation may vary in consistency or influence.
- **Members of the public are regularly and routinely consulted** as part of the policy development for BIK topics. There is broad, inclusive, and transparent engagement, with feedback actively shaping policy outcomes.
- **Children are listened to directly in the policy development process** but are not formally involved in decision-making.

### Stakeholder mechanisms

- Netvis leads an information and media literacy network of different stakeholders called TUMI, which is comparable to EMIL, EPRA's Taskforce on Media and Information Literacy. The TUMI network is a path to share and coordinate policy, guidelines, and educational materials from Netvis and other participants.

## BIK+ actions

### Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Actions to promote a safe, age-appropriate digital environment that respects children’s best interests.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Content rating systems for online/video games	X			
DSC measures protection of minors				X
DSC-SIC working relationship				X
Definition of harmful online content	X			
Complaints handling mechanism	X			
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws				X
Age verification requirements				X
Digital wallet for minors		X		
EU harmonised age verification		X		
Laws on online marketing	X			
Protecting mental health and well-being	X			

Table 5: Safe digital experiences - Iceland

### Implementing EU laws

- Iceland has an Act on monitoring children's access to films and video games, no. 62/2006. PEGI is used extensively.

- The Digital Services Act has not yet been implemented in Iceland as it is an EEA state.

## Addressing online harms

- There is a definition of harmful content in the Act on monitoring children's access to films and video games, no. 62/2006 and in the Media Law, no. 38/2011.
- The [Icelandic Media Commission](#) receives complaints about online Media content and about video-on-demand. The [Consumer Agency](#) can receive complaints about social media advertising aimed at the Icelandic market, including advertising directed at children.

## Age assurance

- The [Icelandic authorities](#) have been a part of the testing of the EUDI Wallet. Plans are underway to create an age-verification system for children in Iceland. However, the implementation method is still unknown.
- The [Proposal for a parliamentary resolution on the protection of children and young people in the digital arena](#), currently under deliberation in Parliament, aims to set a minimum age of 15 or 16 for social media and to introduce stricter rules on advertising and marketing that use children's personal information.

## Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Teaching online safety	X			
Digital skills training	X			
Policies on digital use in schools		X		
Adequate teacher training				X
Non-formal online safety education	X			

Critical media literacy	X
Creative digital skills	X
Supports for parents	X

*Table 6: Digital empowerment - Iceland*

### Digital empowerment in formal education

- Information and Media literacy training, as well as Digital Citizenship, are part of the public curriculum for the primary schools.
- A [proposal](#) to amend the law on primary schools and add the authority for the minister to regulate the use of smartphones and smart devices in primary schools and leisure centres.

### Digital empowerment and lifelong learning

- [Netvis](#) provides online safety education for the non-formal education sector, such as leisure centres for youth. Netvis also provides Information and Media Literacy training, including on disinformation.
- Digital creativity is part of Netvis's educational materials. Other initiatives may be in place within individual schools or leisure centres.
- The [Home and School Association](#), a former coordinating actor in the SIC, runs awareness-raising and education for parents on child online safety, among others, and has received public funding to run its programmes.

## Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children’s rights

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Promoting civic engagement	X			
Promoting children's rights	X			
Child-friendly policy documents				X
Addressing digital inequalities	X			

Positive digital content

X

*Table 7: Active participation, respecting rights - Iceland*

### **Active participation**

- There are a number of youth organisations, youth councils and municipalities that promote youth participation and civic engagement.
- Examples include: [Samfes](#), the [National Youth Council of Iceland \(LUF\)](#), and the [Youth Council of UNICEF](#)
- Iceland's [Ombudsman for Children](#) conducts awareness-raising work on online safety and child participation, linked to its advocacy on children's rights in general and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). NGOs also undertake awareness raising on children's rights, such as UNICEF and Save the Children in Iceland.
- The state previously had a policy on [Child-friendly Iceland](#), including actions related to implementing the UNCRC. This has not been in place since the end of 2024, however.

## Best practices

### Example 1

#### ***Internet traffic School (Netumferðarskólinn)***

Internet traffic School (Netumferðarskólinn) is part of the government's cybersecurity action plan and was initially funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Industry and Innovation. Around 9.000 children aged 6-13 years, 2.000 parents and 800 teachers in 80 schools across the country have participated in the Internet Traffic School for the past 1,5 years.

The Media Commission and the Data Protection Authority were initially tasked with developing educational materials on media literacy, data protection, AI literacy, and internet security. The educational programme is a mix of lectures, group projects, and conversations with the children, with an emphasis on raising awareness, understanding concepts, and empowerment. At the same time, teachers receive an educational lecture to help them further engage their students in discussions about difficult matters in the online environment. They then get material to work with and ideas of projects to do with their students to keep on educating them about the digital world. In the evening, the parents are invited to an educational meeting to empower them to keep the discussion going at home. After the lecture, they sit together in groups to reach a consensus as a parent group on how they will support each other and their children in staying safe online.

### Example 2

#### ***Líttupp ("Look Up")***

Líttupp ("Look Up") is a high-impact Icelandic awareness campaign launched to address the growing concern of digital over-consumption and the erosion of real-world social presence. Organised by the [Icelandic Media Commission](#) (Fjölmiðlanefnd) in collaboration with the national [Safer Internet Centre \(Netvís\)](#) and various stakeholders, the campaign serves as a national "nudge" for children, teenagers, and – critically – adults to reconsider their relationship with screens.

The campaign's central slogan, "Ertu að missa af einhverju?" (Are you missing out on something?), cleverly subverts the modern phenomenon of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). While digital platforms are designed to make users feel they are missing out on online events, Líttupp suggests that the true loss occurs in the physical world. The initiative encourages "social sustainability," urging citizens to prioritise eye contact, active listening, and genuine presence over the dopamine-driven cycle of scrolling.

### Example 3

#### ***"Your Rights Online" Children's rights info brochure***

The "Your Rights Online" (Icelandic: Réttindi þín á netinu) initiative, hosted by Netvís (the Cybersecurity Centre of Iceland) and the Media Commission, is an awareness campaign designed to bridge the gap between abstract legal frameworks and the everyday digital experiences of children and young people.

The initiative translates the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically General Comment No. 25, into actionable guidance for the Icelandic public. Its primary goal is to empower minors by teaching them that their human rights – such as the right to privacy, protection from violence, and freedom of information – do not vanish when they enter digital spaces. In the context of Iceland's recent legislative push to raise social media age limits and regulate school device use, this campaign serves as the educational bedrock for these policy shifts

## BIK+ index 2026: Iceland

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Iceland compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

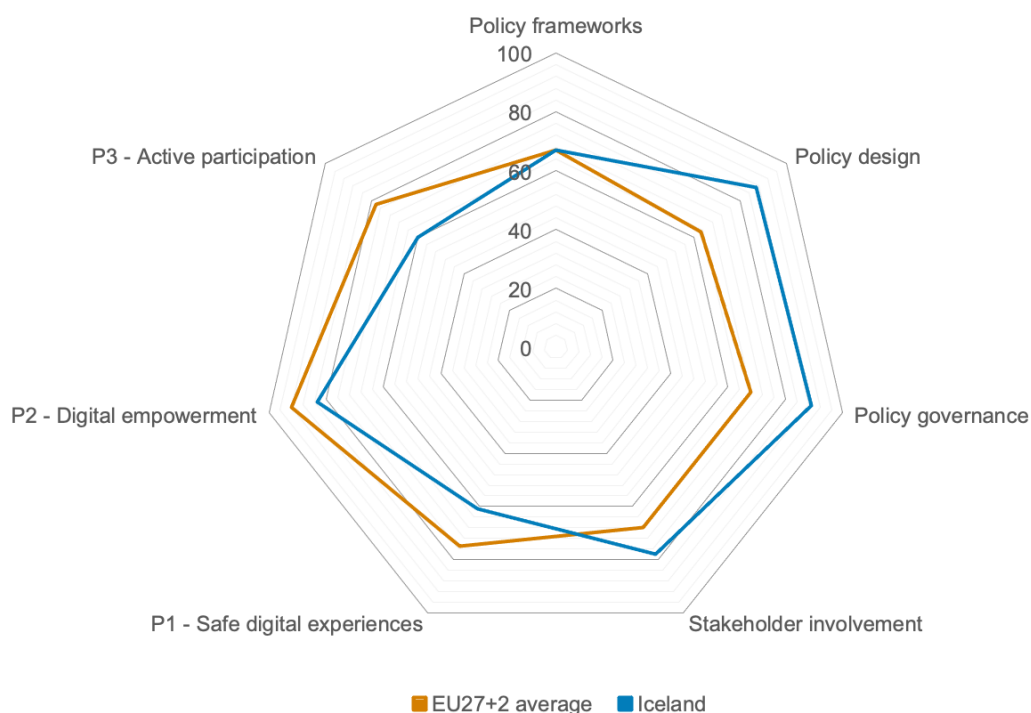


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2026: Iceland - EU27+2 average comparison