



**The Master Plan for Nature Protection
and Energy Utilization**



The Social Impact of Power Stations in Northern Iceland – Some Research Findings

Symposium on Social Impact Assessment
The Master Plan for Nature Protection and Energy Utilization – Phase 4

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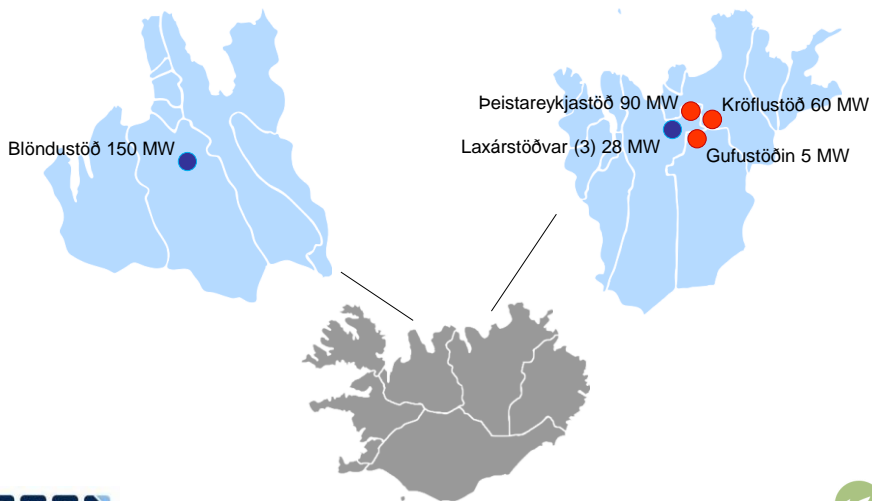
Outline

- Research carried out by expert group 3 in North Iceland 2019
 - Background
 - Methods
 - Preliminary findings

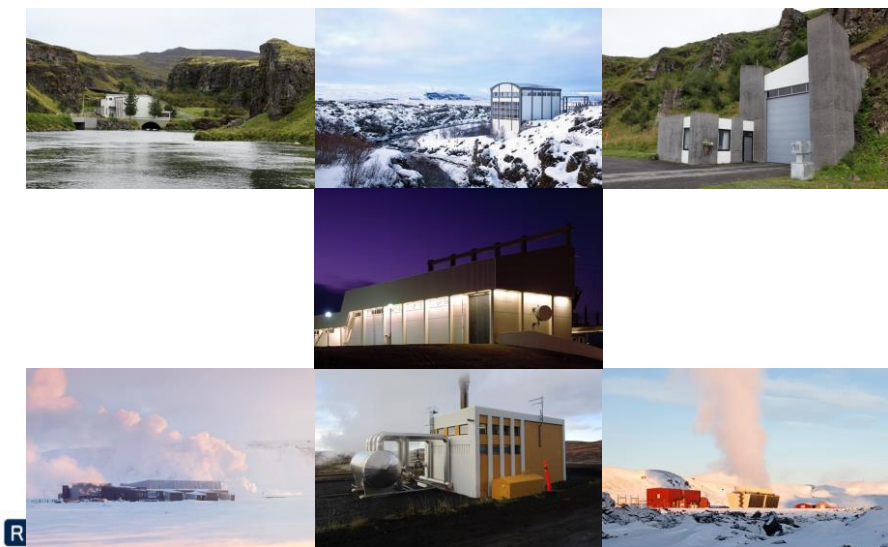


North Iceland

2 regions, 20 municipalities, 38,000 inhabitants



Seven power plants from 1939 to 2017



How do inhabitants perceive social impacts of power stations?

- Guidelines published by IAIA used as a framework
- Social impacts - definition
 - “The processes of analyzing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions”*



*Vanclay, et al. (2015). Social Impact Assessment: *Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects.*
https://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SIA_Guidance_Document_IAIA.pdf



Social impacts in different fields of society Classification in IAIA's guidelines

- People's way of life and Culture (combined*)
- Community (divided into two*)
 - Cohesion, stability, character
 - Services and facilities
- Political systems
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Personal and property rights
- Fears and aspirations



* A deviation from IAIA guidelines during the research work



Research questions

1. What have been the impacts of energy harnessing on the local communities?
 - Difference by e.g. age, gender and occupation
 - Which types of social impacts appear to be most important?
2. Are social impacts different by type of power stations?
 - Geothermal stations vs. hydro power stations
3. Experience of information sharing and local participation?
4. Impacts of the use of electricity on local attitudes towards power plants?
 - What is the electricity used for and where?
5. Difference of attitudes towards power plants by location and periods?
 - Located close to or far from settlements, when was it built?



Methods and scope

- Qualitative research
 - Focus groups (3 in NW-Iceland and 4 in NE-Iceland)
 - Younger persons
 - Older persons (who remember the story...)
 - Interviews (13)
 - Members of local councils, mayors, tourism operators, labour union representatives, industry representatives, nature conservation staff and more
 - Visits
 - Power stations, industry and local initiatives
 - Challenging methodology
 - Limitations of qualitative research – e.g. hard to generalize findings and sometimes to categorize data



Some preliminary findings

- Local economic impacts
 - Use of energy locally important - and how it is used matters
 - Jobs, taxes, resource rent, increased activity etc.
 - More jobs in geothermal plants
- Infrastructure development
 - Road network improvements, increased electricity security
- Ownership appears to matter
 - Public ownership more desirable than private, corporate responsibility important
- New inhabitants in rural communities (staff and their families)
 - Cultural impacts, demographic changes etc. (but increased commuting...)
- Disputes within and between communities
 - More common during older projects - consultation increasing
- Location of power stations away from major settlements more desirable
 - Appearance, water and air quality



Thank you