

September 11th, 2024

Hólmfríður Sveinsdóttir



Place-independent jobs

A real strategy or empty words?

Fjellkonferansen 2024

| **Government of Iceland**
| Ministry of Infrastructure



The background

Global megatrend

Technological changes

Covid-19 pandemic



Regional policy

"Imagine you have a large playground. On this playground, there are lots of toys like slides, swings, and a sandbox. If all the toys are in just one spot, it might be difficult for some kids to reach them. A regional development policy is like deciding where on the playground to place the toys so that all the kids, no matter where they are, can play and have fun."

- (ChatGPT explaining regional policy to a 10-year-old.)





Regional policy – Iceland

Ministry of Infrastructure

Government

Parliament (Althing)

15-year strategy and 5-year action plan (unanimously approved)

- includes 44 initiatives



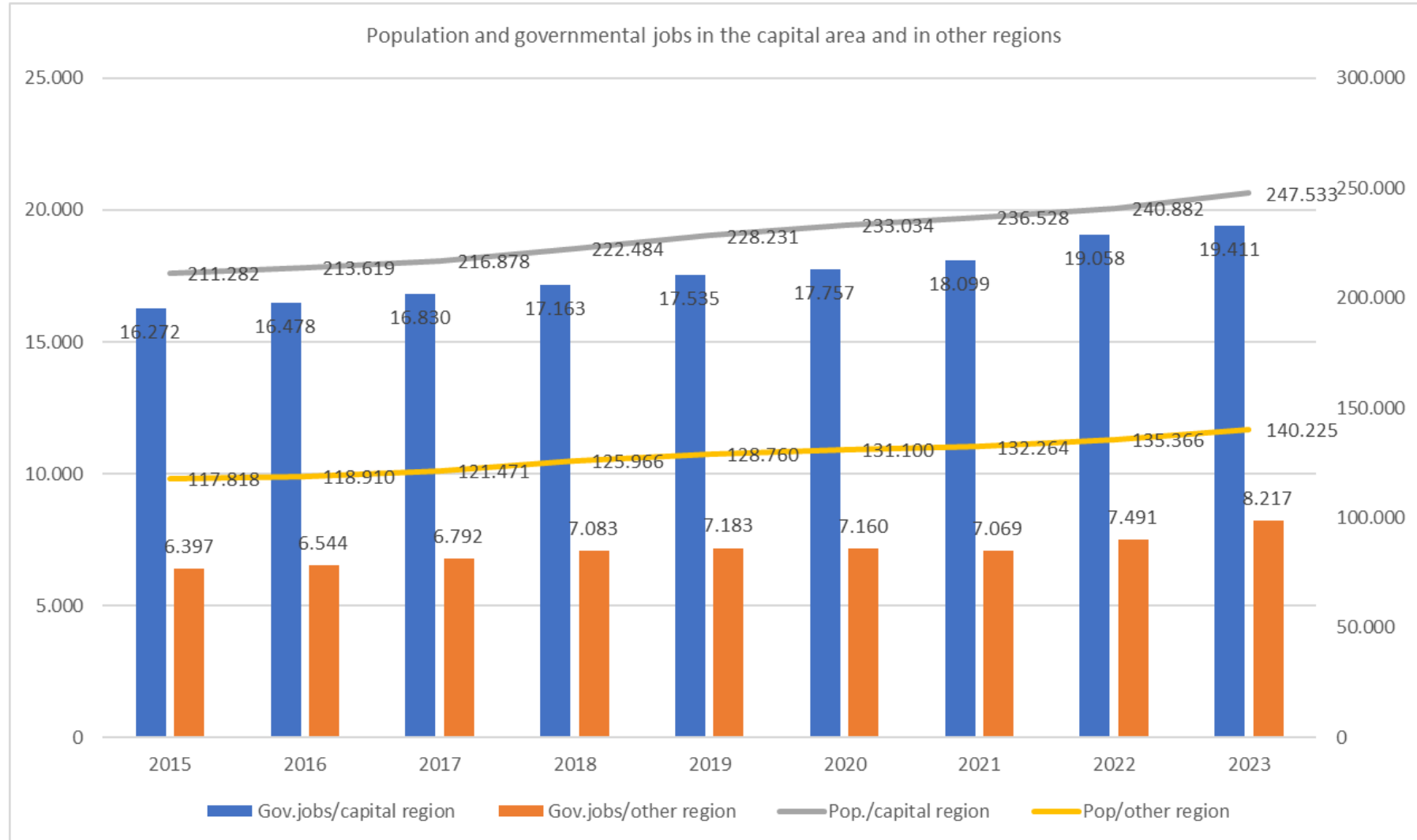
Population and government jobs

Total population, 1.1.2023: 375.218

- The capital area: 239.289 (64%)
- Other areas (7 regions): 135.929 (36%)

Government jobs, 1.1.2023: 27.628

- The capital area: 19.411 (70,3%)
- Other areas: 8.217 (29,7%)





Place-independent job

It can be done anywhere.

It is not the same as hybrid or remote work.

Should not be performed in employees' homes.

Not to be relocated from rural areas to the capital area or abroad.



Action B.7: Place-independent jobs

Objective: To promote freedom of residence by increasing employment opportunities and job diversity in rural areas.

Brief description: Government jobs shall not be location-specific unless the nature of the job specifically requires it, so that residence does not affect hiring. An overview shall be compiled of the number of workplaces/positions and the number of government jobs that are place independent. Following this, goals will be set for increasing workspaces and place-independent jobs and distributing them as equally as possible across the country. Workplace clusters shall be developed in cooperation between the central government, municipalities, and other bodies to ensure good working conditions are available as widely as possible around the country. It will be explored whether the Regional Development Institute can offer loans secured against such clusters. Competitive funds will be set up to support the development of workplace clusters and the one-time cost of jobs located in defined workplace clusters or other areas outside the capital area's employment zone. The success of the initiative will be measured by the number of workplaces and their distribution across the country. Usage and job diversity will also be monitored.



Two pillars

Two pillars:

- The Government (Government coalition agreement)
- The Parliament (Parliamentary resolution)

2018: the aim to ensure that 10% of all advertised jobs were place-independent.

2022: all jobs place-independent, unless the nature of the job requires special location



Implementing

We have ... high-speed internet connection

We have ... guidelines

We have ... job advertisement system ... and recruitment system

We have ... workplace clusters...

We have ... new loan category

We have ... interactive map



Implementing (cont.)

We have ... transferred the responsibility

We have ... ministerial implementation group

We have ... talked a lot

We have ... two comparable surveys (2020, 2023)

We have ... decided to offer grants to institutions



Benefits

Freedom of residence

Increased job diversity

Innovation and increased competitiveness

Greater number of qualified applicants



Challenges

Maintaining teamwork and cohesion

Implementing! Old culture - new mindset...

Advertising jobs

More applications

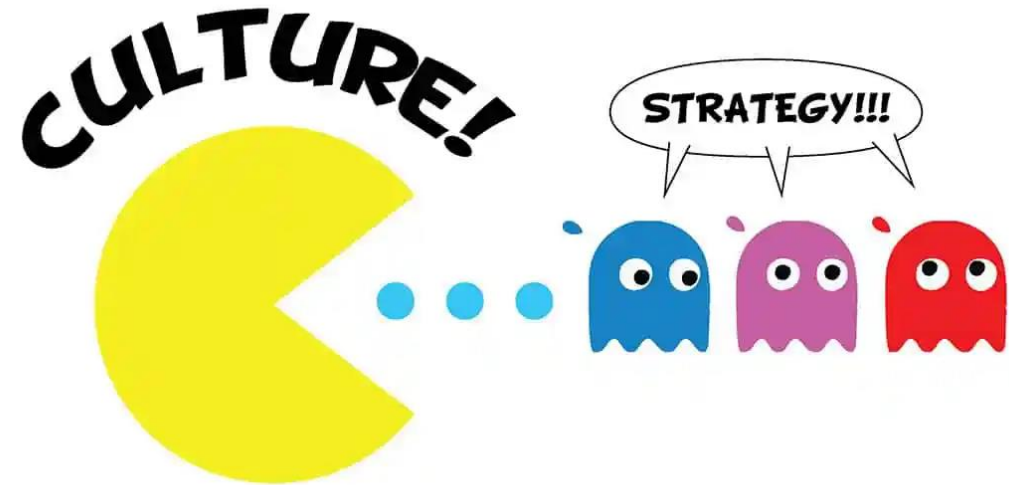
Conclusion

It is a real strategy. Not just empty words.

But – not a magic solution.

Important step – base for a new approach.

Go extra mile to ensure that “the culture does not eat strategy for breakfast”.





Kærar þakkir – mange takk!

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