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Promoting Food innovation in South Iceland

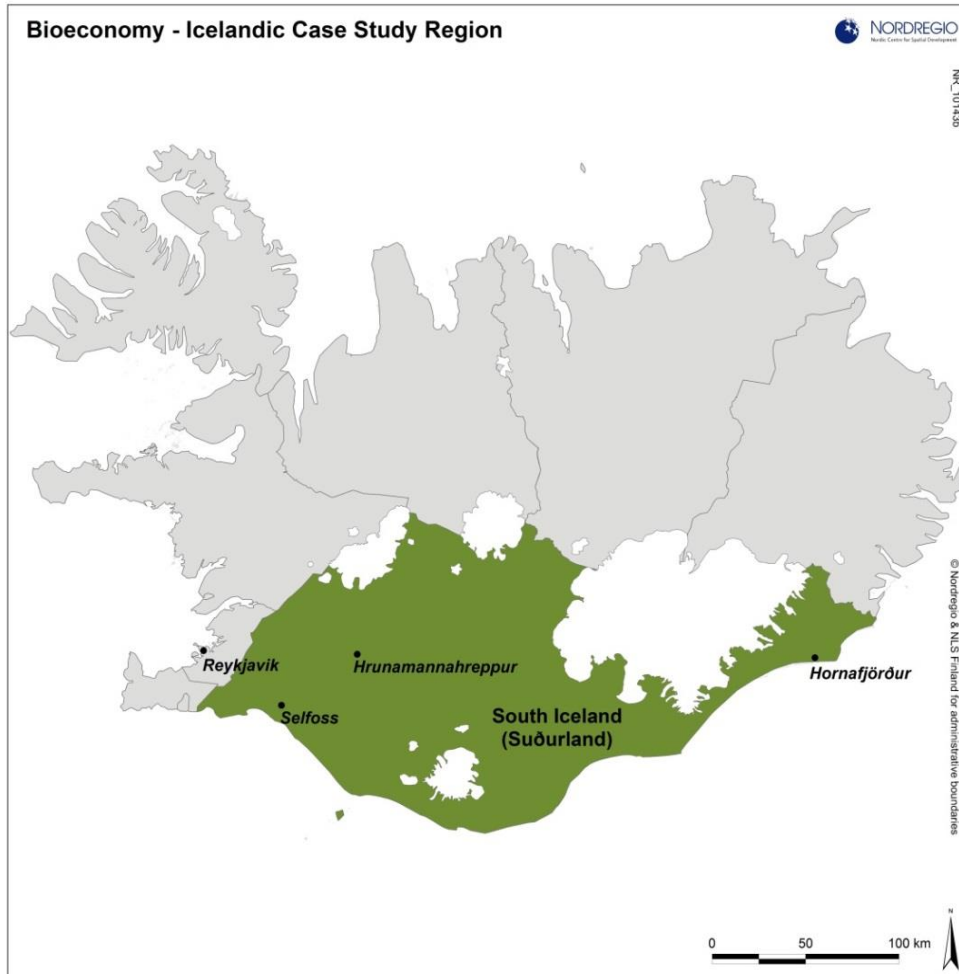
Case study

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Case study on food innovation in South Iceland

- Presentation based on a case study as part of the Nordic Bioeconomy Project (presented earlier by Jukka Teräs)
- This presentation focuses on the results from a qualitative mapping of the *main actors*, *main enabling conditions* and *main challenges* in developing food innovation in the region
- Results based on desk research on existing studies and policies, field visit and seven interviews around South Iceland in March 2014 with representatives from state authorities, local and regional authorities, companies and a higher education institute
- For more information and all the case studies, please download our working paper at www.nordregio.se

South Iceland region



- 30 966km² and 26 000 inhabitants (2012), population concentrated among the coastline
- 15 municipalities, variation from very small and peripheral municipalities, to the town of Selfoss close to Reykjavik
- Agriculture & fisheries traditionally the main sectors, tourism has been expanding in importance

Food innovations in South Iceland

- Examples on food-related innovations from the region: developing sheep cheese, potato chocolate, smoked eel, innovative ways to utilise & increase added value from by-products in fish processing, etc., developing direct retailing of food products to hotels and tourists
- In addition to innovation in food development, also other types of innovations in agriculture and fisheries (e.g. using fish waste as fertiliser in agriculture, more efficient packaging and transport)



Main actors

- Central national strategies such as the Iceland 2020 Strategy have included bioeconomy-related issues and e.g. eco-innovation
- Matís (Icelandic Food & Biotech R&D) as a government-owned company very central for food innovation in South Iceland (Food Innovation Centres)
- Innovation Centre Iceland
- The Regional Association of Local Authorities in South Iceland (SASS)

Main enabling conditions

- Natural resources
- Cooperation between actors and the support available from state-level agencies located in the region
- Availability of funding
- Potentials in synergies between sectors



Main challenges

- Challenging innovation culture and limited resources in SMEs
- Human resources
- Possible funding gaps & high innovation requirements



Photo: Helgi Thorsteinsson/norden.org

Some concluding remarks

- Food innovation may have potential in a predominantly rural region as it does not require high technology and can build on local competence and knowledge
- The need for expertise, support and facilities from the state-level seems to remain high
- Many local & regional initiatives also are taken (e.g. education programme, municipal innovation fund)
- The need to build on local and regional opportunities, work cross-sectorally & cooperate is clear

Thank you!

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