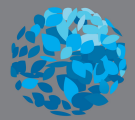


# Snæfellsnes

Peninsula, Iceland

An EarthCheck Certified Story



EARTHCheck  
PLATINUM CERTIFIED  
2018

June 2019



# Lifetime Experiences.

Walking the Talk

# Destination Performance.



## Energy

148.8 GJ / Person Year,  
which is 15.75% better  
than the Baseline level\*



## GHG Emissions

3.1 t CO<sub>2</sub>-e / Person Year,  
which is 25.3% better than  
the Baseline level



## Water

506.7 kL / Person Year,  
which is 13.4% better than  
the Best Practice level.



## Waste

1.29m<sup>3</sup> / Person Year, which  
is 24.56% better than the  
Baseline level.

## Savings over 10 years

- Avoided GHG emissions equivalent to **taking 1,295 cars off the road.**
- Saved enough water to fill **656 Olympic sized pools.**
- Avoided sending **112, shipping containers (20 ft) of waste to landfill.**

\*A Person Year is equivalent to 365 full person days. This activity measure incorporates both resident and guest populations, where guests who visit the Destination are classified as either "Guest Nights" or "Day Guests" (i.e. a person who arrives and departs on the same day). Each "Guest Night" is counted as one person day and each "Day Guest" is counted as one-third of a person day.

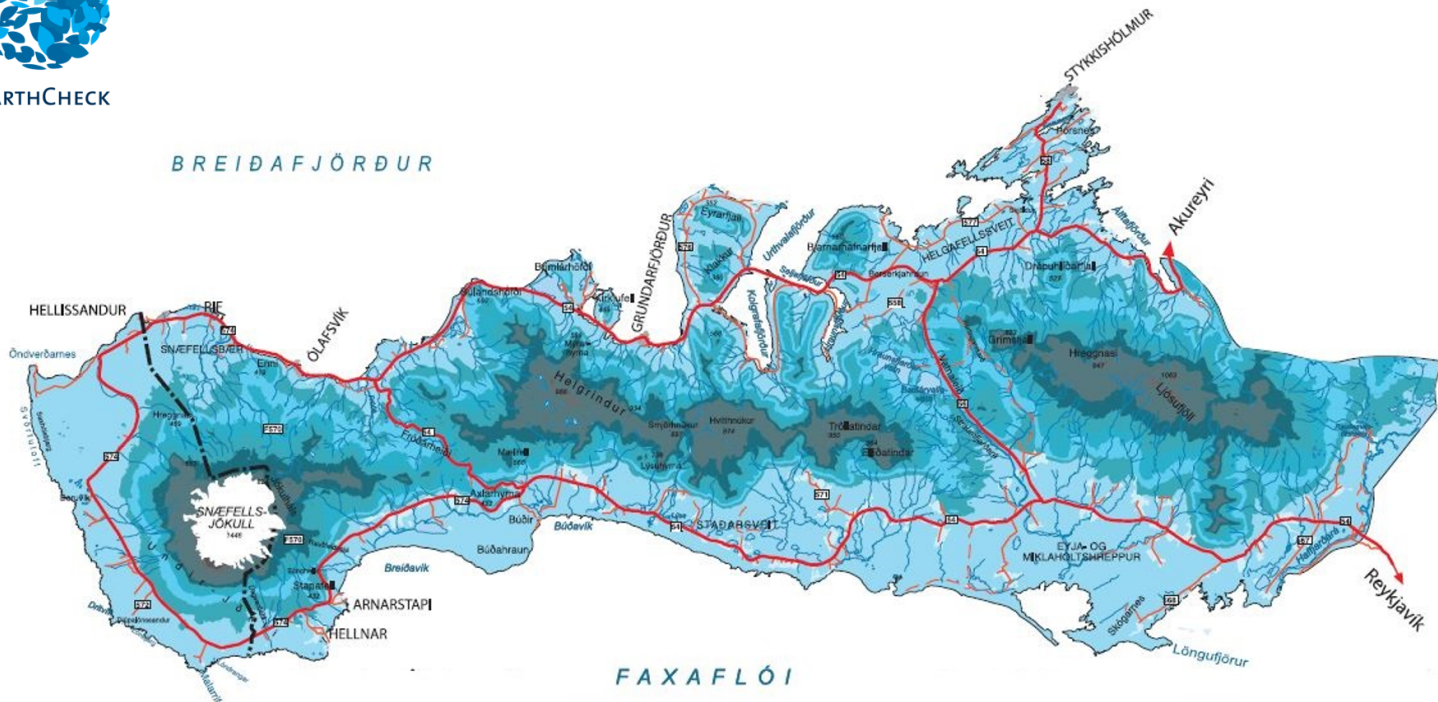
# EarthCheck

Good for the Planet Good for Business





EARTHCHECK



Snæfellsnes is a 90 kilometre long peninsula, located in West Iceland. Recognised for its natural beauty and diversity, Snæfellsnes is a surreal combination of spectacular mountains, towering waterfalls, sandy beaches and friendly communities. The breathtaking Snæfellsjökull glacier-capped volcano is the jewel in the crown! It's a magical place woven in history, enchantments and Icelandic sagas – the focus of Jules Verne's science fiction novel 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' and more recently a backdrop in the Game of Thrones series. Iceland has captured the imagination of many a traveller, as a mythological destination that offers deep connections and rich experiences, a holiday with lasting impact!

Snæfellsnes became the first EarthCheck Sustainable Destination in Europe and in 2018 achieved EarthCheck Platinum Certification, a milestone that marked 10 continuous years of measuring and managing their greenhouse gas emissions, energy, waste and water consumption and social impact.

Determined to preserve natural and cultural assets, address local community issues and enhance wellbeing, the Snæfellsnes municipalities of Eyja- og Miklaholtshreppur, Helgafellssveit, Grundarfjarðarbær, Snæfellsbær and Stykkishólmsbær, together with the Snæfellsjökull National Park, established a shared policy of sustainable development to invest in people and training, as well as economic and social infrastructure.

Affectionately known as 'Iceland in a nutshell', Snæfellsnes is a traveller's dream with breathtaking scenery and a sparse population of just 4,000 people. Life centres around fishing, agriculture and tourism, however 80% of businesses acknowledge that tourism is their main source of income and in 2018, tourists outnumbered the local Icelandic population by double. Nonetheless, the Snæfellsnes community is aware of how tourism can be detrimental if not carefully managed.

Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Project Manager

**“The journey with EarthCheck began in 2003 when we started the process to become an environmentally certified and more sustainable community. Our work with EarthCheck gave us a head start to focus on sustainable destination management using quality control, discipline and compliance as tools.”**



### Community engagement

Since Snæfellsnes joined the EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations program, the local community has played a key role in their sustainability journey.

‘In the beginning, we had to convince the community to be more aware and involved in our projects. Nowadays, thanks to increased global awareness and the reach of our sustainability program, more local businesses, organisations and individuals want to be involved and have started their own environmental initiatives,’ Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Project Manager

The local workforce, community services and natural resources are a priority for the municipalities – protecting cultural heritage and the individuality of each community as well as promoting job opportunities and local businesses. Working closely with stakeholders has ensured a more coordinated process and respect for laws and regulations regarding resource control.

Communication is instrumental for community engagement to enhance relationships, educate tourists, as well as reduce waste, conserve water and save energy.

### Reducing waste generation

An environmental initiative to reduce plastic waste in Snæfellsnes has gained momentum - reducing waste sent to landfill by almost 50%.

‘Our plastic bag free community initiative took place a few years ago. It was a huge success, received media attention nationwide and sparked similar initiatives in other municipalities around Iceland.’ Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Project Manager

In addition, the five municipalities installed either a two or three bin system for compost and recycling for homes, institutions and businesses; as well as waste stations for the disposal of light bulbs, batteries, electronics, wood and other waste materials.

**“We’ve learned that one of the best ways to reach our goals in most of our key performance areas is with social and cultural management – the best way to see positive development in our indicators is with outreach. Which is challenging, but nevertheless effective.”**





Regular beach cleanup programs are coordinated to collect discarded waste from fishing activities and to minimise pollution entering the ocean. In 2019, a community coastal cleanup amassed **10 tons of waste in just one day!**

#### **Conserving water**

The municipalities combined efforts to conserve their water resources and minimise usage of potable water.

'We've installed auto shut pressure on public showers and dual flush toilets and we also put regulations on the use of water in our harbours.' Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Project Manager

A water awareness information campaign was introduced to conserve water in homes and businesses. The use of eco-friendly certified cleaning products is encouraged and chlorine has been reduced in public swimming pools and artificial ponds.

#### **Saving energy**

As tourists numbers increase in Snæfellsnes, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use is measured and carefully monitored. Electric charging stations for cars have been installed across the peninsula and the community is encouraged to opt for more environmentally conscious transportation, such as walking, biking and travelling in public buses rather than driving.

The community are now using clean energy sources and have eliminated non-renewable fuels such as gasoline heating systems. The transition from electric heating to heat pumps has been beneficial, saving up to 49% of energy.

#### **Challenges**

The EarthCheck Sustainable Destination program has successfully helped Snæfellsnes to measure and monitor their environmental and social impact - but the path towards a more environmentally friendly community also has its challenges.

**“Mobilising as many people as possible to cooperate with the project has been a big challenge. This applies to managers and employees of local communities who have, for the most part, generally been positive towards the project but who could invest themselves more in it.”**



“The budget has been tight and progress has been slower in certain fields than the entities in charge of the project would have wanted. ‘It has been necessary to use the available funds sparingly and to put almost all the emphasis on the core business, at the expense of the visibility of the project for the public,’ Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Project Manager

The EarthCheck Sustainable Destination program has helped the team at Snæfellsnes to motivate people to become more proactive and embrace sustainability. In addition, the sharing of expertise and work processes between the entities in charge, facilitated the implementation of the sustainability strategy so that resource allocation and budget expenditure is more efficient.

#### **Outcomes and Benefits**

‘It is difficult to estimate directly the value of the project - at least not yet in financial terms. Nonetheless, it is undebatable that a lot has been done for the preservation of the peninsula’s natural and cultural assets.

EarthCheck’s international reputation and credibility has played a key role in spreading the word about the project and getting people on board’

#### **What’s next?**

‘We care greatly about our natural resources and wildlife, and we’re working on future projects to keep our environment clean. Looking back at what we have achieved, we can see that we have come a long way. Our goal is to improve further - successful work takes time so we will continue, step by step. There is hope for sustainability; it’s the only option we have.’ Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Project Manager

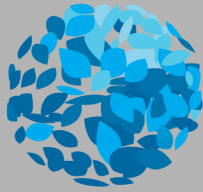
**“Establishing an environmental plan has promoted less use of resources, which brings more benefits for the environment and importantly a great change of attitude has taken place across the community. A valuable foundation has been built for the future.”**





UMHVERFISVOTTUN SNÆFELLSNESS  
HAFNARGÖTU 3 | 340 STYKKISHÓLMUR | 433-8121 |  
849-2486 | [WWW.NESVOTTUN.IS](http://WWW.NESVOTTUN.IS)





EARTHCHECK

EarthCheck is the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for travel and tourism. Since 1987, we have helped businesses, communities and governments to deliver clean, safe, prosperous and healthy destinations for travellers to visit, live, work and play. We understand the value of big ideas and the importance of clear communication. We know that what can be good for the planet is also good for business.



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