Íslandsbanki 4Q20 Financial Results



Section 2.



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Íslandsbanki 4Q20 Financial Results



1. 4Q20 highlights and key takeaways

A return to growth is likely in 2021 following deep recession

Strong foundations facilitate a robust recovery when world-wide pandemic impact fades



Moderate leverage throughout the economy increases resilience to shock.





... and loose monetary conditions are supporting households and businesses



10 February 2021

Key takeaways

A robust 4Q20 to end an extraordinary year

Steady underlying operations

- Universal relationship banking strategy delivered a strong quarter with ROE at 7.6% following a 7.4% ROE in Q320
- NIM holds firm at 2.5% despite lower rates environment
- Continuous digital uptake during the C-19 period contributes to improved cost to income ratio beating the Bank's target at 51.7%

3 Significant balance sheet strength

- Stable NPLs and diversified loan portfolio with solid collateral coverage
- Temporary increase in stage 2 loans due to C-19 impact on tourism
- Rock solid liquidity and capital metrics with total capital ratio at 23% with high REA density at 69% and low leverage ratio at 13.6%

2. Enhanced business position

- #1 in brokerage at NASDAQ OMX Iceland and #1 in M&A in 2020
- AUM rises to a record high, with a 35% market share
- Low rates propel significant profitable growth and increased market share in residential mortgages to 19%

4 A catalyst for a postitive sustainable development

- First Icelandic bank to publish a Sustainable Financing Framework
- First sustainable and first green bond by an Icelandic bank
- 50% of sustainable bond proceeds already allocated to eligible environmental and social projects

Financial targets

ROE at 7.6% in the fourth quarter – all other targets met in 2020

	Target	2020	Guidance
ROE in excess of risk-free rate	4-6%	2.6%	 Target of 4-6% on top of risk-free rate. Risk-free rate is currently 0.5% 8-10% ROE is based on average expected risk-free rates through the business cycle. Based on the risk-free rate of 0.5% the ROE target in the very short term is 4.5-6.5%
Return on equity	8-10%	3.7%	 The COVID-19 pandemic had a material adverse effect on the Bank's earnings in 2020 and therefore the ROE target will not be met this year. The Bank will strive to get back on track to reach its ROE targets from 2021 onwards
Cost / Income ratio ¹	<55%	✓ 54.3%	 The Bank continues to invest in IT infrastructure and process efficiency to improve the C/I ratio in the medium to long term
Tier 1 capital ratio	>13.2-14.7%	✓ 20.1%	 Based on a management buffer of 50-200bp, the CET1 target range is currently 13.2-14.7% Long term CET1 target is >16%. In line with the target range, the Bank expects to maintain a CET1 ratio of over 16% in the medium to long term The Bank is substantially over capitalized with regard to the current regulatory requirement, which is a favourable position to be in in light of the economic uncertainties relating to COVID-19
Total capital ratio	> 17.5-19.0%	✓ 23.0%	 Based on the regulatory capital requirement with a management buffer of 50-200 bp Current capital requirement is 17.0% including recent suspension of the countercyclical capital buffer in March 2020
Dividend payout ratio	40-50%	✓ 50%	 The Board of Directors proposes that ISK 3.4bn will be paid in dividends to shareholders, which is 50% of profits in 2020 and is in line with the Bank's policy of paying dividends of 40-50% of the profit of the year The Board may convene a special shareholders' meeting later in the year to propose payment of additional dividends if the Bank's accumulated capital reserves are considered to exceed its long-term capital requirements

1.Calculated as (Administrative expenses + Contribution to the Depositors' and Investors' Guarantee Fund – One off items) / (Total operating income – one-off items)



Operational highlights in 4Q2020

First sustainable bond by an Icelandic bank issued in the quarter

- Íslandsbanki was involved in large projects undertaken by the three listed real estate companies. Bonds were issued for Eik and Reginn and the Bank advised on during Reitir's stock share offering.
- 14 projects received a total of ISK 30.5 million from the Íslandsbanki Entrepreneurship Fund.
- Íslandsbanki issued the first sustainable bond by an Icelandic bank for EUR 300 million with a maturity of 3 years. The issue was more than 3 times oversubscribed and was placed to investors across Europe. The proceeds of the issue were used for loans that meet the conditions set out in Íslandsbanki's Sustainable Financing Framework.
- For the second year in a row, Íslandsbanki received the Icelandic Association of Business Women (FKA) Equality Scale in 2020.
- The Norwegian asset management company Storebrand Asset Management partnered with Íslandsbanki to offer three green investment funds in Iceland. The funds are open to both general investors and institutional investors in Iceland.
- Íslandsbanki became a member of PCAF, a global partnership of financial institutions whose objective is to develop and implement metrics for measuring greenhouse gas emission for loan and asset portfolios. PCAF (Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials) handles the development and use of climate metrics that financial institutions can use to analyse carbon emissions in their loan and asset portfolios. Participation in the project is part of Íslandsbanki's Sustainability Policy and the Bank's initiative for extensive co-operation on responsible business practices.
- Íslandsbanki continued to be a leader in financial education and hosted educational sessions on various issues, such as finance at retirement, finances during maternity leave and savings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educational meetings were held online with significant participation.

Major progress on the digital front

Quick time to market for digital products supported all business units navigating through COVID-19



A series of value-added digital initiatives in 2020 supported accelerating customer digital adoption rates while reducing fixed costs

Over 31 million visits to the app and online bank. Crucial infrastructure improvements in 2020

- Ensured high customer satisfaction all year¹
- New features added to digital channels e.g. electronic signatures for all main applications
 - Improved customer experience instantly

Digital onboarding & app access now available for retail, SMEs and large corporates

- Leading to 47% increase in customer onboarding through digital channels
- Automated application and credit
 scoring for mortgages to households introduced
 - Supported a record breaking 67% increase in mortgages

Open banking policy developed, open API portal for developers made accessible and account aggregation added to the app

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 Íslandsbanki customers are now able to access their account balance from other local banks via Íslandsbanki's app

Conversational AI chatbot launched in 4Q20 and online reservation system for advisory services implemented

 Over 20 thousand conversations successfully completed to date

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Sustainable Financing Framework: Allocation and impact

50% of proceeds from sustainable and green bonds issued in 2020 has been allocated to eligible projects



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Íslandsbanki 4Q20 Financial Results



A robust quarter with strong underlying operations¹

Majority of net impairments in Q420 and FY20 are C-19 related

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- Universal relationship banking strategy delivered a strong quarter with ROE at 7.6% .following a 7.4% ROE in Q320
- NIM holds firm at 2.5% despite lower rates environment
- Continuous digital uptake during the C-19 period contributes to improved cost to income ratio beating the Bank's target at 51.7%

ISKm	4Q20	4Q19	Δ	Δ%	2020	2019	Δ	Δ%
Net interest income	8,258	8,291	(33)	-0.4%	33,371	32,822	549	1.7%
Net fee and commission income	2,865	2,945	(80)	-2.7%	10,525	10,899	(374)	-3.4%
Net financial income (expense)	783	(840)	1,623	-193.2%	(1,391)	(820)	(571)	69.6%
Net foreign exchange gain	87	116	(29)	-25.0%	451	139	312	224.5%
Other operating income	63	920	(857)	-93.2%	197	2,125	(1,928)	-90.7%
Total operating income	12,056	11,432	624	5.5%	43,153	45,165	(2,012)	-4.5%
Salaries and related expenses	(3,381)	(3,624)	243	-6.7%	(12,917)	(14,019)	1,102	-7.9%
Other operating expenses	(2,692)	(2,823)	131	-4.6%	(9,829)	(10,469)	640	-6.1%
Administrative expenses	(6,073)	(6,447)	374	-5.8%	(22,746)	(24,488)	1,742	-7.1%
Contribution to the Depositor's and Investors' Guarantee Fund	(154)	(216)	62	-28.7%	(679)	(936)	257	-27.5%
Bank tax	(414)	(814)	400	-49.1%	(1,588)	(3,528)	1,940	-55.0%
Total operating expenses	(6,641)	(7,477)	836	-11.2%	(25,013)	(28,952)	3,939	-13.6%
Profit before net impairment on financial assets	5,415	3,955	1,460	36.9%	18,140	16,213	1,927	11.9%
Net impairment on financial assets	(1,829)	(1,463)	(366)	25.0%	(8,816)	(3,480)	(5,336)	153.3%
Profit before tax	3,586	2,492	1,094	43.9%	9,324	12,733	(3,409)	-26.8%
Income tax expense	(234)	(659)	425	-64.5%	(2,472)	(3,909)	1,437	-36.8%
Profit for the period from continuing operations	3,352	1,833	1,519	82.9%	6,852	8,824	(1,972)	-22.3%
Discontinued operations, net of income tax	173	(174)	347	-199.4%	(97)	(370)	273	-73.8%
Profit for the period	3,525	1,659	1,866	112.5%	6,755	8,454	(1,699)	-20.1%

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Net interest income rising despite lower rates environment

Rise due to increased lending – increase in lending margin compensates for drop in deposit margin



NII – comparison 4Q YoY ISKm



NII – comparison YoY ISKm



Robust net fee and commission income

Growth in fees from loans and guarantees result of increase in new lending and refinancing



Substantial decrease in administrative expenses

Cost-to-income ratio for the year and guarter below the Bank's 55% financial target











2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

1. Negative cost in Other segment in 4Q19 due to changes in internal cost allocations

2. The cost-to-income ratio excludes bank tax and one-off items

3. See Notes 13 and 14 of Consolidated Financial Statements 2020 for further detail

4. FTE numbers exclude seasonal employees

910

1.8

12

1.6

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Majority of lending funded with deposits

Strong funding structure mainly comprises long-term funding and stable deposits



Growth in total assets

Loans to customers grew by 11.9% during the year, mainly from increase in mortgage lending

Comments

Liquid assets

 Three line-items – cash and balances with Central Bank, loans to credit institutions and bonds and debt instruments – amount to about ISK 297bn of which ISK 285bn are liquid assets

Bonds and debt instruments

 The Bank continued to shift liquidity to Treasury bills, short dated Treasury bonds and covered bonds, increasing Bonds and debt instruments during the year

Shares and equity instruments

 ISK 9.1bn used for economical hedging

Other assets

 Fall due to less volume of unsettled transactions at year-end

Assets, ISKm	31.12.20	30.09.20	Δ	Δ%	31.12.19	Δ	Δ%
Cash and balances with Central Bank	78,948	95,022	(16,074)	-16.9%	146,638	(67,690)	-46.2%
Loans to credit institutions	89,920	61,898	28,022	45.3%	54,376	35,544	65.4%
Bonds and debt instruments	128,216	149,426	(21,210)	-14.2%	52,870	75,346	142.5%
Derivatives	6,647	3,731	2,916	78.2%	5,621	1,026	18.3%
Loans to customers	1,006,717	970,309	36,408	3.8%	899,632	107,085	11.9%
Shares and equity instruments	14,851	14,657	194	1.3%	18,426	(3,575)	-19.4%
Investment in associates	775	750	25	3.3%	746	29	3.9%
Property and equipment	7,341	7,409	(68)	-0.9%	9,168	(1,827)	-19.9%
Intangible assets	3,478	3,554	(76)	-2.1%	4,330	(852)	-19.7%
Other assets	4,125	17,159	(13,034)	-76.0%	6,608	(2,483)	-37.6%
Non-current assets and disposal groups held for sale	3,173	4,809	(1,636)	-34.0%	1,075	2,098	195.2%
Total Assets	1,344,191	1,328,724	15,467	1.2%	1,199,490	144,701	12.1%



Loans to customers grew by 11.9% in 2020

New lending amounted to ISK 309bn in 2020 compared with ISK 226bn in 2019

Highlights

- New lending amounted to ISK 160bn for individuals and ISK 149bn for companies
- Outstanding loans that are refinanced within the Bank are shown both as an increase and a decrease in the net carrying amount
- Refinancing of outstanding loans amounted to ISK 63bn for individuals and ISK 34bn for companies
- The mortgage portfolio increased by 34% while the total loan portfolio of Personal Banking increased by 28% (ISK 91bn) which is the largest growth of the business units
- The loan portfolio of Business Banking rose by 1% (ISK 2bn) and Corporate & Inv. Banking by 6% (ISK 19bn)

Main sources of changes in net carrying amount

ISKbn, consolidated



Diversified loan portfolio

Strong growth in mortgage lending, loans to individuals 43% of the Bank's loan book









Credit exposure covered by collateral: ISK 930bn By collateral type



Comments

- Business divisions support customer centric structure
- The material increase in the mortgage portfolio is mostly due to refinancing from pension funds
- The shift from CPI-linked to non-indexed loans follow the Central Bank's decrease in key rates from 3.0% to 0.75% in 2020
- Tourism has been the sector hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and most of the tourism portfolio has been transferred to IFRS 9 stage 2

Loans to customers By sector, carving out tourism Mortgages to Individuals 29% 31% 37% Individuals other 8% Seafood 8% 6% 13% 12% Real estate 12% Commerce and services 14% 14% 14% Industrial and transportation 9% 8% 8% 6% 7% 6% Other sectors 9% 10% 8% Tourism 12% 10% 9% 31.12.18 31.12.19 31.12.20

COVID-19 moratoria taper off, forbearance increases

Temporary moratorium uniformly executed and broadly applied during 2020



Gross carrying amount, ISKbn, weekly development 200 150 100 50 0 31.08.20 30.09.20 31.03.20 30.04.20 31.05.20 30,06,20 31.07.20 31.10.20 30.1,20 Out of moratoria Extended moratoria classified as forberance Active moratoria

Loans to companies granted COVID-19 moratorium

COVID-19 moratorium important first support measure

- Íslandsbanki entered into an agreement with other lenders in Iceland to provide a moratorium for corporate and household customers, uniformly executed across institutions
- In accordance with guidelines from EBA and the Central Bank, moratoria of this kind do not trigger classification as forbearance
- Further extensions of moratoria may be granted on a case-by-case basis and will be classified as forbearance

Further extension of moratorium

- By end of year 11.1% of the gross performing loan book (not in Stage 3) was classified as forbearance, up from only 2.9% at end of Q3
- The increase is mostly due to extension of moratoria that were granted in Q4 to companies in the tourism sector (around 5% of the loan book)
- Loans that have been granted extended moratoria are primarily with collateral in residential or commercial real estate
- The extended moratoria usually last until mid-2021
- If the pandemic has not subsided by that time, further measures will be explored

Performing loans with forbearance

Gross carrying amount, ISKbn, by sector



Support loans as a part of government measures

- Support loans with government guarantees amounting to ISK 3.7bn were originated in 2H2020. Around 60% of the amount is with full government guarantee.
- The support loans and supplemental facilities are part of the support measures that the government has put in place following COVID-19 and Íslandsbanki facilitates the process

Loan portfolio with solid collateral coverage

Majority of collateral in residential and commercial real estate



- The average LTV for mortgages¹ was 64% at end of 2020, compared to 62% at year-end 2019. The increase is due to new lending.
- The LTV distribution for commercial real estate is shown for the following industry sectors where this is the most important collateral type: Real estate, Commerce & services and Industrials & Transportation
- Following a sharp rise in recent years, the Central Bank's CRE price index has fallen in 2020
- Íslandsbanki's registered value of commercial real estate as collateral has risen at a much slower rate and lagged market prices in prior years. The Bank's CRE loan portfolio is therefore less vulnerable to market price changes.





LTV distribution of loans secured by commercial real estate ISKbn



1. The average LTV can be calculated in many different ways and therefore the definition is important for comparison to other banks. The weight is *Íslandsbanki's* total amount outstanding on the property and the LTV used is the maximum LTV of all *Íslandsbanki's* loans of the property.

Loans to the tourism sector moved to Stage 2 in 2020

Exposure in Stage 2 increases due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Stage 3 has not yet increased







■ past-due >90d

Net impairment charges amount to ISK 8.8bn in 2020. Thereof ISK
 6.1bn from loans to the tourist sector that were transferred to Stage
 2 with an increased impairment allowance (see next page)

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- There has not yet been a significant change in exposures in Stage 3
- The reserve coverage ratio (RCR) in Stage 3 might appear low, 11.9% for individuals and 29.8% for companies, but is explained by good collateral coverage and high cure rate
- The collateral coverage in Stage 3 is 70% (ISK 21bn)
- In January 2021 one material exposure in Stage 3 was fully repaid as expected, bringing the NPL ratio down to 2.7% and the RCR in Stage 3 up to 27.7%. The RCR for companies goes up to 35.7%.

Not past-due or less than 90d

Fullv

covered by

collateral



Tourism sector hardest hit and fully in Stage 2, overlay factors to account for uncertainty

8.8

0.6

0.9

Net impairment on financial assets ISKbn, by period

A few distressed credit cases
General economic environment







Macroeconomic scenario applied to IFRS 9 model Base case, uncertainty is high

Change in economic indicators (%)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Economic growth	1.9	(8.6)	3.1	4.7	2.5
Housing prices in Iceland	3.4	2.6	1.5	3.0	4.0
Purchasing power	1.8	3.0	1.1	2.1	2.1
ISK exchange rate index	8.5	11.2	3.1	(1.8)	(2.8)
Policy rate, Central Bank of Iceland	3.9	1.5	1.2	2.0	3.0
Inflation	3.0	2.7	2.7	1.9	1.9
Capital formation	(6.6)	(10.2)	1.5	6.7	1.2
thereof capital formation in industry	(18.1)	(16.9)	(0.2)	8.7	3.5

Exposure to tourism by effect of COVID-19 crisis Net carrying amount, a proportion of approximately ISK 100bn



31.03.2020 30.6.2020 30.9.2020 31.12.2020

Temporary changes to the impairment model due to COVID-19

- To account for the uncertainty in the operating environment of companies in the tourism industry, not reflected in their current risk class, they are classified into four groups based on an assessment of vulnerability to when the pandemic subsides
- Groups 2-4 were transferred to Stage 2 and carry a life-time expected credit loss
- An overlay factor was applied to the expected credit loss, comparable to an increase in up to three risk classes
- A higher haircut was applied to value of collateral for the higher impact groups in the more severe scenarios

Comments

- The impairment model of IFRS 9 is forward-looking and reflects a probability weighted average of possible outcomes
- In addition to the base forecast, scaling factors are produced for a good and a bad case
- The probability weights of the scenarios were set to 15% (good) 55% (base) 30% (bad) at year-end
- A shift of 5% weight from the baseline to the pessimistic scenario would increase the impairment allowance by ISK 0.5bn while a 5% shift from the baseline to the optimistic scenario would reduce the allowance by ISK 0.25bn
- The net impairment charge over loans to customers was 0.18% in Q4 and 0.91% in FY2020



Deposits from customers increased by 9.9% in 2020, mainly from retail customers and corporations

Liabilities & Equity, ISKm	31.12.20	30.09.20	Δ	Δ%	31.12.19	Δ	Δ%
Deposits from Central Bank and credit institutions	39,758	36,438	3,320	9.1%	30,925	8,833	28.6%
Deposits from customers	679,455	698,610	(19,155)	-2.7%	618,313	61,142	9.9%
Derivative instruments and short positions	6,936	8,406	(1,470)	-17.5%	6,219	717	11.5%
Debt issued and other borrow ed funds	387,274	324,752	62,522	19.3%	306,381	80,893	26.4%
Subordinated loans	27,194	26,798	396	1.5%	22,674	4,520	19.9%
Tax liabilities	5,450	7,137	(1,687)	-23.6%	7,853	(2,403)	-30.6%
Other liabilities	11,920	44,074	(32,154)	-73.0%	27,063	(15,143)	-56.0%
Total Liabilities	1,157,987	1,146,215	11,772	1.0%	1,019,428	138,559	13.6%
Total Equity	186,204	182,509	3,695	2.0%	180,062	6,142	3.4%
Total Liabilities and Equity	1,344,191	1,328,724	15,467	1.2%	1,199,490	144,701	12.1%

Stable deposits remain the main source of funding

Long term funding sources increased steadily during the year



Successful funding operations and good market access

The Bank's sustainable and green funding journey started on a positive note in 2020



Subordinated loans

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Sound management of liquidity – all ratios above requirements

Liquid assets of ISK 285bn are prudently managed, 21% of total assets



1. LCR in ISK was 95% at YE20 compared to 110% at YE19. LCR in foreign currencies increased to 463% at YE20 from 325% YE19

2. NSFR in foreign currencies was 179% at YE20 compared to 156% at YE19.

Market risk well within appetite

The Bank has a modest market risk profile, despite an increase in interest rate risk

Comments

- Interest rate risk in the banking book rose in Q4 due to increased fixed rate mortgage lending, primarily in non-indexed ISK
- The interest rate risk is well within appetite

Market risk exposure and market risk appetite

Average positions per quarter (% of total capital base)



Currency imbalance, compared with regulatory limit ISKbn, end of quarter



Interest rate risk in the banking book Weighted average BPV, end of guarter, ISKm



Banking book inflation imbalance ISKbn, end of quarter



Sound capital position to navigate uncertain environment

High REA density and low leverage in international comparison



Íslandsbanki's capital ratios well above target

Countercyclical buffer reduced to 0% as a result of COVID-19

Comments

- The countercyclical capital buffer was lowered from 2% to 0% in March 2020 as a response to COVID-19
- The Financial Supervision Committee decided that the 2019 SREP assessment concerning additional capital requirements (Pillar 2-R) shall remain unchanged at 1.7% of REA
- The overall capital requirement is therefore unchanged at 17% of REA
- Íslandsbanki's total capital target ratio is based on the overall regulatory requirement in addition to a 50-200bp management buffer
- Due to the uncertainty in relation to the effects of COVID-19 on the capital base, the Bank aims to have an ample buffer in excess of the current target until there is further clarity regarding international travel and other sources of uncertainty
- Íslandsbanki's profit and a new statement from the Central Bank allows for a dividend payment to shareholders according to dividend policy, which amounts to 40-50% of 2020 profits



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4. Annex - Financial overview and about Íslandsbanki

Financial overview Key figures & ratios

		4Q20	4Q19	2020	2019	2018
PROFITABILITY	After tax profit, ISKm	3,525	1,659	6,755	8,454	10,645
	Return on equity (after tax)	7.6%	3.7%	3.7%	4.8%	6.1%
	ROE margin	7.1%	0.9%	2.6%	1.2%	2.1%
	Net interest margin (of total assets)	2.5%	2.7%	2.6%	2.7%	2.9%
	Cost to income ratio ¹	51.7%	62.9%	54.3%	58.8%	66.3%
		31.12.2020	30.9.2020	30.6.2020	31.12.2019	31.12.2018
BALANCE SHEET	Loans to customers, ISKm	1,006,717	970,309	933,320	899,632	846,599
	Total assets, ISKm	1,344,191	1,328,724	1,303,256	1,199,490	1,130,403
	Risk exposure amount, ISKm	933,521	942,339	923,133	884,550	845,949
	Deposits from customers, ISKm	679,455	698,610	681,223	618,313	578,959
	Customer loans to customer deposits ratio	148.2%	138.9%	137.0%	145.5%	146.2%
	NPL ratio ²	2.9%	3.3%	3.6%	3.0%	2.0%
LIQUIDITY	Liquidity coverage ratio (LCR), for all currencies	196%	136%	179%	155%	172%
	Net stable funding ratio (NSFR), for all currencies	123%	113%	117%	119%	114%
CAPITAL	Total equity, ISKm	186,204	182,509	179,722	180,062	176,313
	Total capital ratio	23.0%	22.2%	22.2%	22.4%	22.2%
	Tier 1 capital ratio	20.1%	19.4%	19.4%	19.9%	20.3%
	Leverage ratio	13.6%	13.4%	13.4%	14.2%	14.6%

1.Calculated as (Administrative expenses + Contribution to the Depositors' and Investors' Guarantee Fund – One off items) / (Total operating income – one off items). 2. Stage 3, loans to customers, gross carrying amount

This is Íslandsbanki

Moving Iceland forward by empowering our customers to succeed



Íslandsbanki 4Q20 Financial Results



5. Annex – Icelandic economy update

Economy likely to gain a foothold this year after COVID-19

GDP growth to gain pace in H2/2021; robust growth expected in 2022

Highlights

- The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the near-term outlook for the Icelandic economy drastically
- ISB Research estimates that GDP contracted by 8.7% in 2020
- A sharp decline in exports and a contraction in private domestic demand contributed to the fall in GDP while decreasing imports and increased public consumption softened the impact
- ISB research forecasts GDP growth at 3.2% in 2021, driven mainly by the recovery of exports and moderate growth in consumption and investment
- In 2022 the outlook is for 5% growth, with exports and domestic demand set to regain an even more secure footing during the year
- In 2023 we project growth at just under 3.6%, driven by exports, investment, and consumption in roughly equal measure. If the forecast materialises, real GDP will finally rise above the pre-pandemic level in the last year of the horizon



1. Shaded areas and dotted lines indicate ISB Research/ forecasts Source: Statistic Iceland, ISB Research, the Central Bank of Iceland, OECD

Tourism sector hit hard by COVID pandemic

Number of tourists visiting Iceland shrinks by 75% in 2020



1. Shaded areas and dotted lines indicate ISB Research/ forecasts

correlated with decline in inflation and

unemployment

Source: Statistics Iceland, Iceland Tourist Board, ISB Research, the Central Bank of Iceland

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Current account resilient to export shock

Dramatic fall in exports causes a temporary deficit but medium-term outlook benign

Highlights

- In the baseline forecast, this year's number of tourists would be about onethird of the 2019 figure. Revenue growth in the tourism sector would nevertheless be over 40% YoY
- This is supplemented by growth in goods exports, chief among them farmed fish, aluminium, and other industrial goods. Overall, the outlook is for nearly 12% export growth in 2021
- For 2022, tourism will deliver the lion's share of the year's 16% export growth. In 2023, we expect moderate export growth of 5%
- Imports will broadly follow the export trend at a more moderate pace
- Despite the 1/3 drop in exports, the current account was broadly balanced in 2020, with the contraction in imports and a handsome income account surplus compensating for the plunge in exports
- The CA surplus is expected to measure 1.3% of GDP, or ISK 40bn, this year. In 2022 and 2023, it will measure 4% or more of GDP, according to our forecast



1. Shaded areas and dotted lines indicate ISB Research/ forecasts Source: Central bank of Iceland, Statistics Iceland and ISB Research

Domestic balance sheets healthy before COVID

Economy-wide leverage moderate in comparison with peers and historical levels









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 Shaded areas and dotted lines indicate forecasts Source: Central bank of Iceland, Statistics Iceland, OECD and ISB Research

Businesses braving headwinds

Business investment has contracted and lending growth to businesses is minimal

Highlights

- Gross capital formation sagged in 2019 despite robust residential investment. Total investment declined by 6.9% YoY in 2019
- In 2020, the contraction was steeper, as all main components of investment turned downwards. We estimate the contraction in 2020 at 10.5%
- The investment-to-GDP ratio has not suffered much, however, unlike the post-financial crisis situation
- The outlook is for investment to gather pace gradually, but without sudden surges, in the next few years. Public sector investment will lead growth in 2021 with the private sector taking the reins in 2022-2023
- Business sentiment has seesawed recently. After a sharp drop in sentiment as the pandemic hit, business executives generally seem increasingly optimistic that the headwinds will prove temporary
- Lending growth to businesses has slowed markedly after peaking in H2 2018. Corporate lending was almost unchanged over the year 2019 and growth has been negligible in 2020



Protracted unemployment wave in the offing?

The recovery of tourism plays a key role in determining how fast unemployment subsides



Highlights

- The Corona crisis has laid bare Iceland's vulnerability to shocks in labour-intensive industries such as tourism, other services sectors, and construction
- Unemployment has skyrocketed in the recent past, and over 10% of the labour force is now without work despite the mitigating measures taken by the government
- Due to a more protracted period of low tourism, unemployment also looks set to be more persistent than previously projected
- The labour market likely to start gradually improving by Q3 and slack to remain throughout most of the forecast horizon
- Unemployment is expected to average 9.4% in 2021, 4.7% in 2022, and 3.3% in 2023
- If economic developments follow the path set out in the downside scenario, unemployment will be even more persistent, remaining above 10% for most of this year and above 5% until 2023

Private consumption a countercyclical force

High unemployment will make its mark on private consumption, but the financial strength of most households will help

Highlights

- Although private consumption contracted by around 3.4% in 2020, the contraction was concentrated in consumption abroad while consumption within Iceland more or less held its own
- Households' strong asset position, higher real wages among those still employed, and the effects of interest rate cuts have boosted consumers' appetite for spending and will continue to do so
- On the other hand, high unemployment has a strongly negative impact.
 Furthermore, the effects of public health measures and uncertainty about consumers' spending appetite and capacity will persist in coming months, albeit to a diminishing degree over the course of the year
- ISB Research forecasts that private consumption will grow by nearly 2% in 2021 and just over 3% per year in 2022 and 2023
- Households' consumption will therefore act as a countercyclical force throughout the business cycle this time, in a departure from the pattern seen in recent decades in Iceland





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Real estate market resilient despite recession

Residential housing market turnover has been brisk and prices have risen steadily

Commercial property prices closer to historical trend after price decline in H1 of 2020







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ISK likely to strengthen with rising tourist numbers

The CBI has significantly mitigated exchange rate volatility but could pull back this year

Highlights

- The ISK depreciated by nearly 10% against major currencies over the course of 2020
- The depreciation came mainly in two waves: In March and April, after the pandemic first started raging worldwide, and again in the autumn, due to renewed rise in the pandemic and significant financial outflows
- The CBI sold a total of EUR 820m from its FX reserves in 2020 with the aim of mitigating ISK volatility
- Presumably, the ISK will be under pressure until the tourism industry bounces back, but by the same token, we expect the CBI to continue mitigating excess volatility
- Once the trade balance moves back into surplus, the ISK is expected to appreciate once again as fundamentals remain sound and short-term FX obligations are at a low
- ISB Research's forecast assumes that the ISK exchange rate will be 8-9% above its 2020 average by the end of the forecast horizon



1. Dotted lines indicate ISB Research forecasts Source: Central bank of Iceland, Statistics Iceland, Íslandsbanki Research

Inflation spike to retreat quickly in coming quarters

Policy rate to remain low into 2022

Highlights

- Inflation rose steadily in 2020, from
 2.0% at the beginning of the year to
 3.6% by December and 4.3% in
 January 2021
- ISK depreciation in 2020 is the largest cause of rising inflation, although there have been domestic inflationary pressures as well and house prices have not had a downward impact as expected
- The outlook is for a relatively swift disinflation episode as the slack in the economy takes hold and the ISK eventually appreciates
- Inflation could reach the CBI's 2.5% target by year-end and stay close to the target in 2022-2023
- Following cuts totalling 2.25% in 2020, the policy rate is likely to stay at 0.75% until the economy is on solid footing again
- Rate hikes unlikely until 2022 and expected to be gradual thereafter
- Long-term rates to rise modestly in 2022-2023 but stay below historical averages



1. Dotted lines indicate ISB Research forecasts Source: Statistics Iceland, the Central Bank of Iceland and ISB Research

Iceland's credit rating has remained at A

Setbacks in the tourist sector has not affected the sovereign ratings





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