

VISIT

Reykjavík, Iceland

A living lab.

Perched on the edge of the Arctic, Iceland is teeming with 130 volcanoes as well as black-sand beaches created by hot lava flowing into the cold Atlantic waters.

Sprinkled throughout Reykjavík's quirky neighborhoods are an abundance of public pools and high-end geothermal spas called "lagoons." Hot tubs of all shapes, sizes, and temperatures are where locals congregate to socialize and relax.

Iceland has long lured visitors with its natural beauty. Now, Reykjavík, the country's capital, is attracting leaders interested in learning more about a number of innovative projects that are leveraging nature in service to human development. Indeed, Reykjavík has become a living lab for sustainable urban infrastructure as the city strives to reimagine its public transit, density, and water utility systems. Meanwhile, as the high-tech sector grows, the small country located on a tectonic bridge between North America and Europe is becoming a destination for data centers due to its subarctic cooling capabilities and renewable energy grid. If workers can step away from the glow of the city and computer screen, they might just catch a glimpse of the northern lights. ▀

Reykjavík, which already heats most buildings using geothermal energy, is moving beyond having just a renewable grid and toward a scalable, future-proof energy infrastructure. Iceland is also able to naturally cool AI server farms with its year-round cold, stable climate.

The capital region has a population of around 250,000 people, accounting for the majority of Iceland's population. Reykjavík is consistently ranked as one of the cleanest, safest, and most environmentally friendly cities in the world.

As the hub of Iceland's economy, Reykjavík last year boasted the world's fifth-highest GDP per capita. The city is experiencing a diversified expansion, driven by tourism, green energy, IT, aluminum smelting, and biotech.