

**Law No. 41 of 1 June 1979 concerning the Territorial Sea,  
the Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf**

**I**  
**The territorial sea**

**Article 1.**

The territorial sea of Iceland shall be delimited by a line every point of which is 12 nautical miles from a baseline drawn between the following points:

1.	Horn	66°27'4 N	22°24'3 W
2.	Asbúdharrif	66°08'1 N	22°11'0 W
3.	Siglunes	66°11'9 N	18°49'9 W
4.	Flatey	66°10'3 N	17°50'3 W
5.	Lágey	66°17'8 N	17°06'8 W
6.	Raudhinúpur	66°30'7 N	16°32'4 W
7.	Rifstangi	66°32'3 N	16°11'8 W
8.	Hraunhafnartangi	66°32'2 N	16°01'5 W
9.	Langanes	66°22'7 N	14°31'9 W
10.	Glettinganes	65°30'5 N	13°36'3 W
11.	Nordhfjardharhorn	65°10'0 N	13°30'8 W
12.	Gerpir	65°04'7 N	13°29'6 W
13.	Hólmur	64°58'9 N	13°30'6 W
14.	Setusker	64°57'7 N	13°31'5 W
15.	Thursaker	64°54'1 N	13°36'8 W
16.	Ystibodhi	64°35'2 N	14°01'5 W
17.	Selsker	64°32'8 N	14°07'0 W
18.	Hvítingar	64°23'9 N	14°28'0 W
19.	Stokksnes	64°14'1 N	14°58'4 W
20.	Hrollaugseyjar	64°01'7 N	15°58'7 W
21.	Tvísker	63°55'7 N	16°11'3 W
22.	Ingólfshöfðhi	63°47'8 N	16°38'5 W
23.	Hvalsíki	63°44'1 N	17°33'5 W
24.	Medhallandssandur I	63°32'4 N	17°55'6 W
25.	Medhallandssandur II	63°30'6 N	17°59'9 W
26.	Myrnatangi	63°27'4 N	18°11'8 W
27.	Kötlutangi	63°23'4 N	18°42'8 W
28.	Lundadrangur	63°23'5 N	19°07'5 W
29.	Surtsey	63°17'7 N	20°36'2 W
30.	Eldeyjarangur	63°43'8 N	22°59'4 W
31.	Geirfugladrangur	63°40'7 N	23°17'1 W

32.	Skálasnagi	64°51'3 N	24°02'5 W
33.	Bjargtangar	65°30'2 N	24°32'1 W
34.	Kópanes	65°48'4 N	24°06'0 W
35.	Bardhi	66°03'7 N	23°47'4 W
36.	Straumnes	66°25'7 N	23°08'4 W
37.	Kögur	66°28'3 N	22°55'5 W
38.	Horn	66°27'9 N	22°28'2 W

The territorial sea shall moreover be delimited by a line every point of which is 12 nautical miles from the low-water line of Kolbeinsey (67°08'9 N 18°41'3 W), Hvalbakur (64°35'8 N 13°16'6 W) and the outermost points and rocks of Grímsey.

Each nautical mile shall be equal to 1852 metres.

### Article 2

The sovereignty of Iceland extends to the territorial sea, the bed of the territorial sea and the superjacent air space.

The sovereignty is exercised in accordance with Icelandic law and the rules of international law.

---

## II THE ECONOMIC ZONE

---

### Article 3

The economic zone of Iceland is an area beyond the territorial sea delimited by a line every point of which is 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured, subject, however, to the provisions of article 7.

### Article 4

In the economic zone, Iceland has:

- a) sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing the resources, whether living or non-living, of the seabed and subsoil and the superjacent waters, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds;
- b) jurisdiction with regard to:
  - (i) the establishment and use of man-made structures;
  - (ii) scientific research;
  - (iii) the preservation of the marine environment;
- c) other rights and duties under international law.

The exercise of rights and the performance of duties in the economic zone shall be in accordance with special

legislation and in conformity with international agreements to which Iceland is a party.

---

### III

#### The continental shelf

---

#### Article 5

The continental shelf of Iceland comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond the territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of the land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance, subject, however, to the provisions of article 7.

...

---

### IV

#### DELIMITATION OF AREAS BETWEEN STATES

---

#### Article 7

The delimitation of the economic zone and the continental shelf between Iceland and other States shall, where appropriate, be effected by agreement with the States concerned. Such agreements shall be subject to approval by the Althing.

Until otherwise decided, the economic zone and the continental shelf of Iceland shall be 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the territorial sea is measured, provided, however, that where the distance is less than 400 nautical miles between the baselines of the Faroe Islands and Greenland on the one hand and of Iceland on the other hand, the economic zone and the continental shelf of Iceland shall be delimited by the equidistant line.

---

### V

#### MEASURES TO PREVENT POLLUTION

---

#### Article 8

Any measures which might pollute or otherwise damage the marine environment shall be avoided.

The Icelandic authorities concerned shall, by special legislation and in conformity with international agreements to which Iceland is a party, take measures to protect the marine environment against pollution and other harmful effects.

---

## VI SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

---

### Article 9

Scientific research in the territorial sea, the economic zone and the continental shelf shall be subject to the consent of the Icelandic authorities concerned.

In normal circumstances such consent shall be granted for research projects within the economic zone or on the continental shelf if the application emanates from another State or a competent international organization and the research project is to be carried out for peaceful purposes and in order to increase knowledge of the marine environment. Consent may, inter alia, be withheld if the application:

- a) is of direct significance for the exploration and exploitation of resources, whether living or non-living;
- b) involves drilling into the continental shelf or the use of explosives or substances harmful to the environment;
- c) involves the construction, operation or use of man-made structures.

### Article 10

An application for a research permit in accordance with article 9 shall be submitted not less than six months in advance of the expected starting date of the project and shall be accompanied by full particulars concerning:

- a) the nature and objectives of the research project;
- b) the method and means to be used, including name, tonnage, type and class of vessels and a description of scientific equipment;
- c) the precise geographical areas in which the activities are to be conducted;
- d) the commencement and termination of the research period;
- e) the name of the sponsoring institution, its director, and the person in charge of the research project;
- f) the anticipated participation of the Icelandic authorities in the research project.

The Icelandic authorities shall communicate their decision on an application within four months if consent is to be withheld.

---

## VII GENERAL PROVISIONS

---

### Article 11

Violations of the provisions of this Law shall be subject to penalties prescribed in prevailing legislation.

### Article 12

Law No. 17 of 1 April 1969 concerning the continental shelf of Iceland hereby ceases to be in force. Furthermore, such provisions of law as are incompatible with this Law also cease to be in force.

### Article 13

This Law shall enter into force immediately.