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EXPLORATION OF REFORESTATION PRACTICES ON ERODED SOILS IN ICELAND

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ABSTRACT

The research project was devoted to the study of reforestation in Iceland and the identification of the main challenges confronting the further development of forestry on eroded soils in Iceland. This research employed semi-structured interviews and a literature survey to collect primary and secondary data. To study reforestation, field visits to the southern part of Iceland were undertaken. The findings of the study showed that the state of reforestation on eroded soils is relatively low due to insufficient government funding, policy gaps and a lack of specialists and manpower in reforestation. Participants of the study used planting methods depending on the climatic and soil conditions of the area. Mainly four types of pioneer trees were used in reforestation, namely birch (Betula pubescens), lodgepole pine (Pinus contorta), Sitka spruce (Picea sitchensis), and larch (Larix Sibirica). Survival rate and economic reasons were identified as the main criteria for the selection of species for reforestation. The following reforestation activities may contribute to Iceland's effort to promote reforestation: formation of volunteers' groups, development of scientific research on improvement of soil fertility in eroded areas, and formulation of a holistic forestry policy harmonized with the agriculture and tourism sectors. On a wider scope, it may be assumed that proactive policy measures and public involvement are the decisive factors in the promotion of reforestation in Iceland.

Key words: reforestation, deforestation, forestry, Iceland