

Beyond Arctic  
Valtakatu 21  
Finland

Reykjavík, 10. mars 2023  
UST202302-473/P.V.B.  
09.04.00

**Subject: permit to fly a drone in protected areas**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Beyond Arctic, dated February 28<sup>th</sup> 2023, for filming permit within Geysir, Gullfoss, Hraunfossar and Barnafoss, Skógarfoss, Seljalandsfoss and Reynisfjara.

Geysir is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 660/2020. All disturbance of geological monuments is prohibited, incl. any inscriptions and disturbance of the activity and water level of the hot spring area, disturbance of hot springs, hot springs, soils and rocks, without permission. Helicopters and other manned aircraft may not land within the area without the permission of the Environment Agency. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Gullfoss is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 141/1979. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life is prohibited. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Hraunfossar and Barnafoss is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 410/1987. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited.

Skógarfoss is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 477/1987. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Photography, cinemaphotography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Reynisfjara and Seljalandsfoss are not protected. The applicant might need permit from landowner/municipality of the area.

**Description of the project:**

Drone would be used for the filming. Flight altitude in all sites would be 60-100 meters. Estimated flight time in each area would be 15 minutes. At Gullfoss the drone would fly once over the canyon and also one round around the canyon. At Hraunfossar and Barnafoss the drone would fly one flight around the waterfalls (in front of waterfalls, 180 degrees flight path) to get larger picture of the area. Distance to waterfalls would be at least 200 meters. At Geysir area the drone would only fly around the area and get the overall image of it. Drone would not fly over the geysir or other geothermal area. At Skogafoss the drone would fly 180 degree around the waterfall and keep minimum 100 meter distance to it. Map with further detailed flight routes was attached to the application. Drones would take off and land in safe location near by these areas. One person would be flying the drone and one person would be looking surroundings all the time. No flight would take place over the people in the areas. There is no need to go off paths and number of employee would be two persons. The drone flight would take place March 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> 2023.

***Impact assessment:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature and conservation value of the sites if conditions of the permit are followed. The project might have negative effect on other visitors experience of the site but if conditions of the permit are followed the Environment Agency considers that the effect can be reduced.

***Conclusions and conditions:***

After revision of the application and regulations for the site it is concluded that no permission is needed to fly the drone in Hraunfossar and Barnafoss in the period requested if the flight does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Beyond Arctic permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Geysir, Gullfoss and Skógarfoss, as described above on March 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> 2023 on the following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project. The permit conditions should be introduced to the staff of the project before work begins.
- The applicant shall inform rangers in the area about their arrival and departure. This is to be done 24 hours before entering the area and again before leaving it.
- If the project dates or description changes the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- Crew members should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- The crew should be conscious of other guests on the sites and make sure that filming causes as little disturbance as possible to other visitors. If the material is meant for public viewing it must be noted in the video/subtext that permission from the Environment Agency was obtained for the filming/photography.
- An unmanned aircraft should never be flown in close proximity to people. Please take precaution not to disturb people's experience, their safety or personal privacy nor the general peace of the protected areas being filmed.
- According to Icelandic law it is forbidden to fly close to cliffs where birds nest. An unmanned aircraft should never be flown near animals or birds, neither in nesting

areas nor during nesting season or any other seasonal time when animals or bird habitats are considered vulnerable.

- Flight time should be kept to a minimum and flight should be avoided during the area's busiest times of the day.
- If the use of unmanned aircraft causes disturbance to wildlife in the area, its use should be ceased at once.
- The conductor of the unmanned aircraft is responsible for the aircraft within the protected area. This includes taking responsibility of any possible risk of harm to people, fauna and nature and leaving no permanent marks on the site in question. Should the aircraft crash, all components from it must be collected and removed from the area.
- For safety reasons, the pilot of an unmanned aerial vehicle must wear marked clothing so that the person can be identified.
- **Due to security reasons, it is prohibited to fly drone less than 50m above Strokkur and Geysir.**
- **It is forbidden to fly drones in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógarfoss.**
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters if birds are in the cliffs.

If the developer causes damage to nature, according to art. 87 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013, the Environment Agency of Iceland can, according to the Nature Conservation Act, f.e. order the licensee to fix damage to nature and vegetation and/or stop the project.

The Environment Agency of Iceland can according to art. 89 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 change conditions of the permit, add new conditions or withdraw the permit in order to prevent damage to nature if environmental conditions change.

According to art 89. in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 the Environment Agency can withdraw the permit if conditions of the permit are not complied to.

Unmanned aircraft should take off and land in a safe distance from other visitors according to regulation 990/2017 on unmanned aircrafts.

The usage of a drone shall be according to regulation no. 990/2017 on the operation of remotely piloted aircraft (<https://www.icetra.is/aviation/drones/>).

Please note that according to the regulation all drones used for commercial flight need to be registered at the Icelandic Transport Authority.

#### ***Permission fee:***

Environment Agency of Iceland charges a fee for processing applications for permits in protected areas based on Article 92 of Act no. 61/2013 on Nature Conservation. The fee for cinematography and/or photography is 52.600 ISK according to art. 24. b. in the agency's tariff no. 535/2015.

#### ***Supervision:***

The Environment Agency will supervise the project. The supervisor will be a ranger from the Environment Agency.

Sincerely

Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir  
*advisor*

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir  
*advisor*