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UST202401-038/P.V.B.  
09.04.00

**Subject: Permit to fly a drone and photograph in protected areas**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from TUI UK, dated, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2024, for a permit to photograph and fly a drone within the protected areas, Búðahraun, Dyrhólaey, Geysir, Gróttta, Gullfoss, Skógafoss and Snæfellsjökull national park.

Búðahraun is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 357/1979. Permit from the Environment Agency is needed for construction work and disturbance to geological formations in the protected area. Off road driving is prohibited. Disturbance to vegetation and wild animal life is prohibited.

Dyrhólaey is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no.101/1978. Construction work and disturbance to geological formations and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. A permit from the Environment Agency is needed for camping inside the nature reserve. This includes tents, motorhomes and campers. According to the management plan regulations permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency for operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the area.

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.

Gróttta is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 13/1984. Construction work and disturbance to geological formations and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Disturbance to vegetation and wild animal life and use of firearms is prohibited. Dogs are not allowed within the nature reserve.

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.

Skógafoss 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. Camping overnight is only allowed in a designated campsite. This includes tents, motorhomes and campers. 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.

Snæfellsjökull National park is protected as a national park cf. regulation no. 935/2021. Operating an unmanned aircraft within the national park is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland according to art. 7 in the Regulation during nesting season. All nature-related research, that is not legally endorsed by a research institution is subject to permission from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Kirkjufellsfoss is not within a protected area. The applicant needs to apply directly to the landowner/municipality of the area.

**Description of the project:**

Permit is requested to photograph and fly a drone in Búðahraun, Dyrhólaey, Geysir, Gróttá, Gullfoss, Skógafoss and three locations within Snæfellsjökull national park (Djúpalónsandur, Lóndrangar and Saxhóll). There would be no need to go off paths. Number of employee would be three persons and the filming and drone flight would take place in the period of January 20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> 2024. Information on when the project takes place in each location was included in the application.

**Impact assessment:**

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature, wildlife and conservation value of the sites at the time requested if conditions of the permit are followed. The flight might have negative impact on other visitors but if conditions are followed the the impact can be recuced.

**Conclusions and conditions:**

After revision of the application, regulations for the sites and management plans it is concluded that no permission is needed for the photograph in all sited and to fly the drone at Búðahraun, Gróttá and Snæfellsjökull nationa park in the period requested if the flight does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants TUI UK permission on its behalf to fly the drone within Dyrhólaey, Geysir, Gullfoss and Skógafoss as described above on January 20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> 2024 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.
- The crew must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- The project's staff is required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites.
- 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.
- **It is forbidden to fly drones in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógafoss due to wildlife protection.**
- For safety reasons, unmanned aircraft are not allowed to fly below 50 m above Strokki.
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs.
- If falcons or eagles are seen in the area, it is not allowed to fly the drone there.

If the applicant 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.

A permission from the landowners and/or the municipality might be needed for the project.

**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 constructions, droneflights, cinematography and/or photography is **76.000 ISK** according to art. 29. b. in the agency's tariff no. 206/2023.

**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**