1 Basic data

State Party
Norway

Name of property
Vegaøyan – The Vega Archipelago

Location
Nordland, Vega
Norway

Inscription
2004

Brief description
A cluster of dozens of islands centred on Vega, just south
the Arctic Circle, forms a cultural landscape that bears
testimonial to a distinctive frugal way of life based on fishing
and the harvesting of the down of eider ducks in an
inhospitable environment. There are fishing villages,
quays, warehouses, eider houses (built for eider ducks to
nest in), farming landscapes, lighthouses and beacons,
The Vega Archipelago reflects the way fishermen/farmers
have over the past 1,500 years, maintained a sustainable
living and the contribution of women to eiderdown
harvesting.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2017

2 Issues raised

Background
The property was inscribed in 2004 on the basis of
criterion (v) with boundaries that followed the municipal
boundary on the island of Vega. The boundary was
intended to include only traditional farms and nature areas
in the property. Farms run with modern practices would be
in the buffer zone. At the time of inscription, the area of the
property was 103,710 hectares and the area of the buffer
zone was 28,040 hectares.

At its 38th session (Doha, 2014), the World Heritage
Committee adopted in decision 38 COM 8E a
Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value
for the property.

In 2009, the municipal boundary was digitalized and the
digital versions were found to vary in small ways from the
earlier mapping. One error was also found: because of the
quality of mapping available, the boundary included a
modern farm in Moen was originally intended to be in the
buffer zone.

The State Party in the 2014 Periodic Report of the property
has identified this change. This modification is the subject
of this report.

Modification
The modification request submitted by the State Party as a
minor boundary modification proposes to expand the
protected area by 3,584 hectares and to expand the buffer
zone by 912 hectares. The new protected area would total
107,294 hectares and the buffer zone would be
28,952 hectares. These modifications to the boundaries of
the World Heritage property and its buffer zone aim to the
harmonisation of the boundaries of the property with the
official boundaries of the Municipality of Vega, which have
been digitalised in 2009 and integrated within the revised
Management plan for Vegaøyan.

New digital mapping resolves as well the problem with the
modern farm in Moen, which was included by mistake.
Moen is a modern run agricultural area that should have
been put in the buffer zone at the time of the inscription,
such as the other active farms, which are already part of the
buffer zone of the property. This modification aims also to
put the property boundaries in line with the precise
digitalised boundaries of the municipality, and therefore to
avoid any confusion in the management system of the
property, as well as for its conservation and protection. No
changes are made to the attributes of the property; all
attributes that contribute to the Outstanding Universal
Value of the property remain inside the new boundary. The
conditions of integrity and authenticity are not affected. The
statutes and plans that relate to the property have all been
updated with the new digital version of the boundaries.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor
modification to the boundary and to the buffer zone of
Vegaøyan – The Vega Archipelago, Norway, be
approved.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone