WORLD HERITAGE - DENMARK

ILULISSAT ICEFJORD

PROPOSAL FOR MINOR BOUNDARY MODIFICATION
ILULISSAT ICEFJORD (N1149)
World Heritage – Denmark
Proposal for Minor Boundary Modification

1. Area of the property (in hectares)
   a) Existing World Heritage site: property – 402,400 ha / buffer zone – 0 ha
   b) Proposed modification: property – 399,800 ha / buffer zone – 64,890 ha

2. Description of the modification
   Proposed change to the property’s boundaries
   The need for an adjustment of the World Heritage boundaries stems from the transition from analogue maps to digital maps. For the nomination of Ilulissat Icefjord for inclusion on the World Heritage List the boundaries were drawn by hand on analogue maps. In 2006, GEUS (Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland) digitalized the maps of the protected area which led to a more precise calculation of the area within the boundaries. Therefore, it appears that there is a difference in the size of the World Heritage area. No change has been made to the actual boundaries in the terrain.

   Proposed buffer zone
   A buffer zone was not defined when Ilulissat Icefjord was inscribed on the World Heritage list. The proposed modification adds a buffer zone to Ilulissat Icefjord. The proposed buffer zone consists of two different types, a local buffer zone and a recreational buffer zone.

   Local buffer zone: 430 ha
   Recreational buffer zone: 64,460 ha
   Total: 64,890 ha

   The local buffer zone covers the area between Ilulissat city limits and the nearby World Heritage boundary. The recreational buffer zone is a two-kilometer-wide zone that follows the boundary of the World Heritage property – except for the urban area – and applies on land, sea, and ice. The proposed recreational buffer zone is considered reasonable on the basis of what can be perceived within the visual proximity of the protected area. In a way, the two kilometers are likewise a symbolic distance as the area is part of the Greenlandic wilderness, as stated in the nomination text, due to the area’s climatic conditions and the fact that no roads exist at the site.

3. Justification for the modification
   Why an adjustment of the property’s boundaries is required
   When Ilulissat Icefjord was nominated in 2004, the nominated area was declared to be 402,400 hectares. However, when GEUS (Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland) digitalized the boundaries of the protected area in 2006 it turned out to be 399,800 hectares. Therefore, it appears that there is a difference in the size of the protected area.

   No changes have been made to the delineation of the boundaries where it is marked in the terrain close to the city of Ilulissat or anywhere else. The boundaries of the World Heritage Site were drawn to encompass all the interdependent elements of the geological process of the icefjord – the relevant portion of the inland icecap, the ice stream, the glacial front and the fjord. The boundaries also follow the watershed of
the fjord and thus incorporate the adjacent moraines, kame terraces and deltas. No changes have been made to that.

Thus, the modification to the World Heritage boundaries is merely a cartographic issue that stems from the difference between the sizes measured on the analogue maps and the digitized maps, respectively – a fact that needs to be brought to the attention of the World Heritage Committee.

**Why a buffer zone is required**

There are a number of developments outside the designated World Heritage Site at Ilulissat Icefjord which could, potentially, threaten its outstanding value. The addition of a buffer zone, both the local and the recreational buffer zone, will enable a more standardized procedure of administration and protect the World Heritage Site in a more profound way. This will furthermore regulate other activities in areas that are considered valuable, but for various reasons were not included in the original legislation. Finally, the buffer zone will send an important signal to Greenland and the local community about the activities that can be allowed near the boundaries of the World Heritage property.

**4. Contribution to the maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value**

A buffer zone will improve the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value. Particularly in the local buffer zone. The buffer zone will specifically

- Add an additional general layer of protection to the core property
- Ensure the control of future construction work in the vicinity of the protected area
- Ensure the protection of views and vistas and thereby secure the fulfillment of criterion (vii)

The Government of Greenland believes that the inclusion of the buffer zone is necessary, both the local and the recreational buffer zone, particularly to be able to control future construction work that could have a negative visual impact on the World Heritage Site’s Outstanding Universal Value.

The buffer zone will benefit the criterion (vii) of Ilulissat Icefjord’s outstanding example of a specific stage in the history of Earth: the last ice age of the Quaternary Period. With its relatively easy access, the glacier has been the object of scientific attention for 250 years and has significantly added to the understanding of ice-cap glaciology, climate change and related geomorphic processes.

The boundaries of the property are clearly defined in relation to the logical topographic criteria of the natural watershed and the nearby village settlements of Ilimanaq and Ilulissat, which are excluded from the property. Thanks to the climatic limitations and the fact that no roads exist at the site, the area’s physical features retain a high degree of natural integrity.

**5. Implication for legal protection**

The local buffer zone is included in the local plan for Avannaata Municipality. This goes for the recreational buffer zone as well. The purpose is to protect, secure, and disseminate the World Heritage. There are no legal implications since the property is still protected under the *Greenland Home Rule Government Order No. 10 of 15 June 2007 on protection of Ilulissat Icefjord*.

Management of the proposed buffer zone is included in the local management plan for the local municipal authorities, Avannaata Kommunia.
Within the buffer zone, as shown on the appended map, facilities or buildings that have the potential to disturb the protected area are not permitted. The local buffer zone has been formally incorporated in the Ilulissat urban plan for Avannaata municipality. Furthermore, the local buffer zone is regulated by the municipal plan’s overall provision, which is also the authority for planning and guidelines in order to secure the Outstanding Universal Value. A limited number of cabins and survival huts can be established as the number of these does not impact the overall use of the area.

In the eastern part of the area the local buffer zone overlaps with a water protection zone. The water protection zone has a much stricter legislation. According to the national legislation, no fuel-operated machines, such as piste machines or snow mobiles, and no construction of any kind are allowed within the water protection zone.

### 6. Implications for management arrangements

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<th>Local Buffer Zone</th>
<th>Recreational Buffer Zone</th>
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| **Construction**      | Not permitted                   | Not permitted
|                       |                                  | However, a limited number of cabins and survival huts can be established as long as the number of these does not change the overall use of the area. |
| **Motorized traffic** | Not permitted, except for piste machines in an already fixed track | Permitted by applicable rules |

Any other activities that have not been mentioned above are permitted within the buffer zone, but subjected to regional and national legislation, as are the cabins and survival huts.

### 7. Maps

Appendix A – Ilulissat Icefjord, Proposed buffer zone
Appendix B – Ilulissat Icefjord, Detailed map showing the proposed local buffer zone
Proposal for Minor Boundary Modification
Ilulissat Icefjord, UNESCO World Heritage Area

Geodetic reference: WGS84. Projection: UTM32N
Map based on the KMS map from the Danish Geodata Agency at 1:250.000
Digital compilation and drafting by Avannaata Kommunia, Hanne Holm Andersen, 2019

C: N 69° 12' W 51° 32'' Coordinate for corner
D: N 69° 12' W 51° 08'' Coordinate for corner

Scale: 1:10,000
Paper: ISO 216 international paper size standard; A2 (420 x 594 mm)

Signature explanation

UNESCO World Heritage Area: 399.800 ha

City area

Local buffer zone for the UNESCO World Heritage Site; 430 ha

Recreational buffer zone for the UNESCO World Heritage Site; 64.400 ha
Proposal for Minor Boundary Modification
Ilulissat Icefjord, UNESCO World Heritage Area

Geodetic reference: WGS84, Projection: UTM22N
Map based on the KMS map from the Danish Geodata Agency at 1:250.000
Digital compilation and drafting by Avannaata Kommunia, Hanne Holm andersen, 2019

C: N 69° 12' W 51° 02' Coordinate for corner
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