



MARIA OLSEN

## VAGAR AIRPORT: MAJOR UPGRADE ADDS NEW EDGE

*As the newly expanded Vagar Airport looks more commercially attractive than ever for airlines and charter operators, the number of passengers traveling through the airport reached a record 225,532 in 2012.*

**T**HE RUNWAY extension that was completed in late 2011 upgraded Vagar Airport FAE significantly while increasing its potential market reach in the international aviation business—the jump from 1250 to 1799 meters of runway made the operational radius from the airport much larger, meaning direct flights to and from Vagar can now be of 6 to 7 hours duration rather than only 2 to 3 hours.

Meanwhile a new passenger terminal currently under construction is expected to be completed by spring 2014.

As a further part of the expansion, the airport also invested to improve flight regularity by acquiring and implementing a new, complete ILS (Instrument Landing System).

Also of note, in early 2012 the national carrier of the Faroe Islands, Atlantic Airways, took delivery of a new Airbus aircraft fitted with a RNP (Required Navigation Performance) navigation system that interacts directly with Vagar Airport's control tower.

Vagar Airport thereby became the first airport in Europe at which an air-

line has approved RNP procedures for approach and departure.

According to the airport, the new equipment has reduced delays related to weather and visibility, to the effect that operations have become more regular.

Along with the appointment of Jákup Sverri Kass as new chief executive, 2012 saw a shift in the way Vagar Airport can position itself in the marketplace. “The fact that we’re now able to handle both medium-haul and short-haul flights can mean a world of difference,” Mr. Kass said.

*CEO Jákup Sverri Kass; View of the newly extended runway (below).*

He certainly has a point considering the relative remoteness of the Faroe Islands.

“The difference is very significant,” he added. “Not only is our biggest client now able to add new destinations to its routes from the Faroe Islands. We also have a case to present to other airlines and charter operators, who may see new business opportunities in the use of our enhanced services.”

**‘IT TAKES TIME’:** Meanwhile more travelers than ever before passed through the airport during 2012, in part thanks to increased operations resulting from the extended runway but also owing to offshore oil and gas exploration in Faroese territory.

“We hit a new record,” Mr. Kass said. “In total 225,532 passengers traveled through the terminal and that was an increase of more than one-tenth on the previous year.”

“Our statistics show that besides progress in the number of passengers, operational regularity to and from Vagar Airport has increased. In other words, as far as concerns weather and visibility issues, passengers and operators can now more than ever count on scheduled arrival and departure times, which, in turn, means less extra expenditures caused by related delays and cancellations.”

As the only airline that offers regular flights between the Faroes and the outside world, Atlantic Airways remains by far the most important client of Vagar Airport. Other airlines, however, use the airport occasionally and according to Mr. Kass, the participation of new operators is expected to increase in the months and years ahead.

“With the improved quality of our service, and once the new passenger terminal will be completed, I believe that commercial airlines and charter operators will have more incentive to consider this airport. The radius within which you can have direct flights to and from the Faroes has grown quite dramatically with the extension of the runway and that opens up a whole new range of potential opportunities.”

Such opportunities may include cruise tourism, chartered flights and business support services.

“For example, the airport could act as an additional entry and exit point for passengers and crew of cruise ships calling at Faroese ports,” Mr. Kass said.

“We could also serve as an alternative gateway for medium-haul chartered flights. And of course, we can continue to help private and commercial jets involved in business support services such as crew management. But first of all, we hope to attract airlines looking to add new scheduled flights to and from the Faroe Islands.”

In the Faroese news media, there has been talk of an operator considering adding the Faroes to their web of Nordic

### Vagar Airport

Vága Floghavn, FO-380 Sørvágur

www.floghavn.fo  
floghavn@floghavn.fo  
Tel.: +298 354 400  
Fax: +298 354 401

CEO: Jákup Sverri Kass  
Airport Manager: Finnbogi Niclasen  
Assistant Airport Manager: Jákup Persson  
Finance Manager: Regin Jakobsen

Vagar Airport Ltd is responsible for conducting all operational activities at Vagar Airport, the Faroe Islands' only airport.

Vagar Airport was originally a military installation, built during World War II.

In the early 1960s the need and popular demand in the Faroes for civil aviation grew to the point of making a modernisation of the runway a necessity to facilitate passenger traffic.

Vagar Airport became operational for civil aviation in 1963. During the early years only propeller aircraft were implemented. Since 1977 jet aircraft too have serviced the routes to the airport. The Danish Civil Aviation Administration administered Vagar Airport from 1963 to April 2007.

destinations. That story, however, has so far proved unsubstantiated.

“People are eager to see something new,” Mr. Kass added, “and we are indeed in dialogue with airlines to make sure they get informed of the new possibilities associated with the Faroe Islands. We realize, however, that it’s a process that takes time.”

