

**Press Release**

## **Nord Stream 2 Welcomes Ramsar Advisory Mission Report**

- > The Ramsar Secretariat has published a report on its November 2019 visit to the Kurgalsky reserve, a protected wetland area in Russia**
- > The report acknowledges and commends the undertakings by Nord Stream 2 AG to minimize impacts of its construction activities and to support long-term rehabilitation, restoration and site management of the Kurgalsky Peninsula Ramsar Site and Nature Reserve**
- > The report concludes that the Nord Stream 2 project is not adversely affecting the overall character of the Kurgalsky Ramsar Site and that documentation produced by Nord Stream 2 AG represents a substantial body of work that greatly improves the understanding of the dynamics of the Ramsar Site**
- > Recommendations support further fulfilment of Nord Stream 2 AG's commitments to sustainable management of Kurgalsky**

**[Zug, Switzerland/Moscow, Russia – 25-May-20]** Nord Stream 2 AG has welcomed the publication of a report by the Ramsar Secretariat on the Kurgalsky Nature Reserve, a wetland of international importance. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline passes through the reserve, requiring measures to protect its unique character and conserve biodiversity.

In the report published today, the Advisory Mission “*acknowledges and commends the undertakings by Nord Stream 2 AG to minimize impacts of its construction activities and to support long-term rehabilitation, restoration and site management of the Kurgalsky Peninsula Ramsar Site and Nature Reserve.*”

The Ramsar report concludes that “*impacts resulting from the cut and installation are local and largely confined to the construction corridor. They are assessed as not having adversely affected the overall ecological character of the Ramsar Site.*” The report further states that “*documentation produced by Nord Stream 2 AG represents a substantial body of work that greatly improves the understanding of the dynamics of the Ramsar Site and habitats found within the project site,*”

The report has been issued following a visit by a Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM) in November 2019, at the invitation of the Russian Ramsar Administrative Authority, the RF Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment, in line with the Russian Federation's status as a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on



Wetlands. During the visit, the RAM held meetings with regional and local officials, environmental NGOs and representatives of Nord Stream 2 AG, among other stakeholders.

“We are pleased that the significant efforts we put into protecting the unique nature of the Kurgalsky reserve have been recognised by the Ramsar Mission. At each stage of the design, engineering and construction, every effort has been made to minimise impact, protect – and even improve – the ecological values of the reserve,” said Simon Bonnell, Head of Permitting at Nord Stream 2 AG.

In order to minimize impact on the protected site, and in the response to feedback received during public consultations on the EIA report, Nord Stream 2 developed the original open-cut construction method using trench boxes and sheet piles during excavation and installation of the pipelines. The method helped maintain and manage water levels, preserve local hydrology, cut the volume of excavated material by 70%, and reduce the width of the construction corridor by half down to a width of only 30 meters in the most sensitive habitats (the coastal forests). Designed specifically for crossing the Kurgalsky reserve, the technical solution allowed to limit the impact of the project activities to a bare minimum: the onshore construction corridor affected only an area of 0.175 km<sup>2</sup> or 0.1 percent of the Kurgalsky reserve’s overall onshore territory.

The Ramsar Advisory Mission recommends that Nord Stream 2’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) be further “*implemented as compensation for human-induced impacts to the Ramsar Site.*”

The BAP is a key component of Nord Stream 2 AG’s Environmental and Community Initiatives (ECo-I) Strategy which is an environmental compensation, biodiversity enhancement and corporate social responsibility program aimed at having a long-term and sustainable positive impact on the pipeline’s landfall area in Russia, beyond compliance with mandatory requirements – by way of commitment to the Environmental and Social Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation (IFC PS).

The BAP has been developed with the involvement of leading international consulting companies to reflect Nord Stream 2 AG’s commitment to implementing the project responsibly and achieving a net gain on the biodiversity value of the Kurgalsky peninsula, in adherence to IFC PS 6 on Environmental and Social Sustainability (Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources). The plan is based on comprehensive environmental surveys performed across the entire Kurgalsky peninsula over three years alongside Russian experts in accordance with international methodology. The 30-year-spanning roadmap identifies biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of territories, and scientific research as priority areas and includes long-term monitoring programs enabling Nord Stream 2 to gauge the effectiveness of the measures it sets forth.



The Advisory Mission has also endorsed Nord Stream 2 AG's efforts to develop proposals for the Kurgalsky reserve management plan. The project is being implemented in agreement with the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Oblast, and has been commissioned to Strelka KB, a leading company in the area of spatial development strategies in Russia. The initiative also involves JSC Ecoproject and the St. Petersburg State University. Together, Nord Stream 2's partners have conducted studies into tourism load and the impact of unregulated tourism on the Kurgalsky reserve. A so-called Visioning Study, which serves as a strategic basis for the management plan proposal, has also been carried out to assess the Kurgalsky reserve's conservation requirements; identify threats and opportunities for its sustainability; and develop a framework to improve biodiversity preservation, including measures to promote sustainable tourism and thereby reduce its footprint and associated adverse impact.

The BAP *"provides a strong framework and baseline for the formulation of a detailed Management Plan for the Reserve,"* the RAM report concludes. *"The proposals outlined in the Tourism Plan should be implemented to reduce adverse anthropogenic impacts by directing and restricting tourist flows to less vulnerable areas, promoting environmental education and awareness activities, and providing a visitor center as a focal point to inform and increase environmental awareness among visitors."*

The Advisory Mission's report confirms the findings of Nord Stream 2 AG's environmental monitoring of the pipeline's offshore and onshore impacts. Previously released results of monitoring showed that construction activities in 2018 and 2019 were in line with or below the assessed impacts in national environmental impact assessments (EIAs). Monitoring also showed that any impacts were temporary and local in nature, as confirmed by leading Russian and international companies retained as external watchdogs to oversee the company's compliance with commitments and high environmental standards when working in the Kurgalsky reserve.

*For detailed information about the environmental monitoring results of pipelay activities, please see: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/en/pdf/document/389/>.*

*For more details on the environmental measures implemented by Nord Stream 2 during construction in the Kurgalsky reserve, please see: <https://www.nord-stream2.com/en/pdf/document/388/>.*



**About Nord Stream 2**

Nord Stream 2 is a planned pipeline through the Baltic Sea, which will transport natural gas over some 1,230 km from the world's largest gas reserves in Russia via the most efficient route to consumers in Europe. Nord Stream 2 will largely follow the route and technical concept of the successful Nord Stream Pipeline. The new pipeline will have the capacity to transport 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year, enough to supply 26 million European households. This secure supply of natural gas with its low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will also contribute to Europe's objective to have a more climate-friendly energy mix with gas substituting for coal in power generation and providing back-up for intermittent renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar power.

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