



## Press Release

# Visioning Study for Sustainable Management of Kurgalsky Nature Reserve Released

- > The release of the Visioning Study marks a new stage of Nord Stream 2 AG's biodiversity conservation efforts in the Kurgalsky Nature Reserve
- > It concludes two years of meticulous research, analysis and planning conducted by KB Strelka and leading Russian environmental and sociological institutions in partnership with the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Region
- > The Visioning Study serves as a strategic basis for the draft Kurgalsky Management Plan
- > The project is a core element of Nord Stream 2 AG's Environmental and Community Initiatives Strategy and part of the company's commitment to biodiversity conservation in line with the Environmental and Social Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation

**[Zug, Switzerland/Moscow, Russia – 20-Jul-20]** Nord Stream 2 AG, in partnership with the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Region (CNR) and KB Strelka, has completed the Visioning Study for the Kurgalsky Nature, a strategic basis for the draft Kurgalsky Management Plan. The document, developed by KB Strelka, concludes two years of comprehensive research, analysis and planning.

Nord Stream 2 AG has sponsored and coordinated the development of the Visioning Study and proposal for the Kurgalsky Management Plan in line with its commitment to the [International Finance Corporation Performance Standard 6](#) (Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources). The initiative is carried out as part of the company's Biodiversity Action Plan: a roadmap that spans 30 years and seeks to deliver a net improvement of biodiversity values in the Kurgalsky Nature Reserve. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline crosses a section of 3.7km in the southern part of the Reserve, which is protected under the Ramsar and Helsinki Conventions, requiring measures to safeguard its unique character and conserve biodiversity.

The Visioning Study is an integrated document developed through extensive research and incorporating an evaluation of Kurgalsky's current conditions, as well as measures to sustainably manage the reserve and ensure biodiversity conservation long-term. It focuses on four key areas:



- > **Analysis of the reserve's current state**, threats to its biodiversity and objectives for the draft Kurgalsky Management Plan;
- > **Measures to prevent violations** of the special protection regime, such as: enhancing the navigation system and environmental information signs; patrolling forest roads and traditional recreational areas; restricting unauthorised driving outside of public access roads; and waste management;
- > **Biodiversity enhancement through environmentally rehabilitating** affected natural complexes, preventing biological threats, and improving habitat management;
- > **Measures to reduce the footprint of uncontrolled tourism** by: educating visitors about the reserve's valuable features; restricting access to the most vulnerable zones; identifying areas where visitors will not disrupt conservation objectives; and building infrastructure (such as designated paths and resting areas) that would accommodate visitors without adverse impacts on biodiversity.

Nord Stream 2 AG's efforts to conserve the reserve's biodiversity – and the Biodiversity Action Plan in particular – have been [commended by the Ramsar Advisory Mission](#) (RAM), which visited the Kurgalsky peninsula wetland of international importance in November 2019. In its report, RAM said the Biodiversity Action Plan “*provides a strong framework and baseline for the formulation of a detailed Management Plan for the Reserve*”. The Mission also emphasised the need to implement such a plan “*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 centre as a focal point to inform and increase environmental awareness among visitors.*”

The Visioning Study was compiled by KB Strelka, a leader in spatial development strategies in Russia, together with key experts and scientific institutions from St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, as well as international consultants. [Nord Stream 2 AG announced partnership with the bureau](#), selected through a tender procedure, in 2018. The St. Petersburg State University (SPBU) and JFC Ecoproject acted as research partners.

For two weeks, from 20 July to 3 August 2020, a digital engagement session will be hosted on a [designated platform](#) to gather stakeholders' comments on the Visioning Study. The platform will feature a video address and commentary from the authors of the document, its executive summary, a link to download the full 340-page version and an interactive online questionnaire. Local residents of the Kingisepp District who do not have an immediate access to the platform from home will be able to do so from computer stations in B. Kuzemkino and Ust-Luga. The feedback – collected and analysed by the SPBU's Centre for Sociological Studies – will be used to finalise proposals for the Kurgalsky Management Plan.

The Visioning Study has been developed in dialogue with experts, authorities, and the public. The core concepts of the document were presented at public and expert community consultations in St. Petersburg and the Kingisepp District in February 2020. Feedback from these engagement sessions, as well as comments collected through a wider [opinion survey](#) by the Centre for Sociological Studies, helped to prioritise suggested measures (such as increased patrolling and waste management) and adjust the approach to unfolding the educational and recreational infrastructure proposed as part of the Visioning Study.



Caroline de Leeuw den Bouter, Head of Environmental and Social Management for Nord Stream 2 AG in Russia, says: “Nord Stream 2 AG is committed to achieving a net gain for the biodiversity of the Kurgalsky peninsula. Through largescale research and analysis of the Kurgalsky Nature Reserve – in particular its biodiversity and the threats it faces – the Visioning Study equips us with the tools to gain a thorough understanding of its environmental value and to design measures that will help preserve and enhance its sensitive habitats.”

The draft Kurgalsky Management Plan proposal, based on the Visioning Study released today, will be submitted to the CNR within the next three months. As the authority in charge of managing the reserve, the Committee will decide on amendments to and/or the adoption of the proposed plan.

Nord Stream 2 AG is open to funding the measures outlined in the Visioning Study, based on further in-depth environmental assessment, on the condition that these receive a formal endorsement by responsible authorities, including the CNR, and a positive response from both the expert community and local residents.

### **About Nord Stream 2 AG**

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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