

Press Release

Nord Stream 2 Presents Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Kurgalsky Nature Reserve

- Nord Stream 2 has developed a biodiversity conservation strategy for the Kurgalsky nature reserve in Russia, in line with international best practice, and initiated an open discussion with the expert community
- The strategy is based on comprehensive surveys and studies of the entire reserve area
- The next step will be developing a long-term Biodiversity Action Plan to achieve a net gain for the Kurgalsky reserve in cooperation with authorities and experts

[St Petersburg, Russia – 24-Jan-18] Nord Stream 2 AG, the developer of a new pipeline to supply Russian natural gas to the EU market through the Baltic Sea, has presented its proposal for a biodiversity conservation strategy for the Kurgalsky nature reserve in Russia. The company invited a range of environmental authorities, NGOs, experts and scientists to an open dialogue on this strategy at a round table in St Petersburg. The approach has been supported by the Committee for Natural Resources of the Leningrad Region.

Among the participants were representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Leningrad regional government, including the Committee of Natural Resources, scientific institutes, environmental NGOs and experts.

To develop the conservation strategy, Nord Stream 2 launched a complex biodiversity study programme across the entire Kurgalsky peninsula in summer 2017. The study was conducted in line with established international methodology over six months to assess vegetation cover features, clarify the distribution of rare protected species of vascular plants, bryophytes, lichens and fungi, amphibians, reptiles, birds, terrestrial mammals, and geomorphological features of the nature reserve.

"The scope of our study in Kurgalsky included mapping rare species throughout the entire reserve, in addition to the already known habitats of certain species," said Dr. Elena Chaadaeva, an expert at ECOPROJECT, the company that carried out the complex biological study. "In line with international practices, we carried out the route surveys along identified research transects in the southern and northern parts of the peninsula and registered every occurrence of rare species."



The outcomes of the study, including the results of a critical habitat assessment and a Ramsar integrity assessment, were presented at the round table by Russian and international experts from several environmental consultancies. The biodiversity study, performed in the area for the first time on such a scale, has made it possible to obtain scientifically consistent and synchronous data on the ecology of the whole Kurgalsky peninsula. In addition to an accurate assessment of the distribution of valuable habitats throughout the reserve, the study identified areas of concern due to anthropogenic or natural processes that could lead to degradation of biodiversity values.

A Critical Habitat Assessment was also performed by leading global environmental consultancy ERM to verify whether endangered species or habitats are present within the general area of influence of the project. They confirmed initial assumptions that the overall Kurgalsky peninsula qualifies as a critical habitat under IFC PS6. The assessment concluded that, although no measurable adverse effects on the integrity and ecological functions of the Kurgalsky reserve will occur as a result of the project implementation, Nord Stream 2 should strive to achieve a net environmental gain for the Kurgalsky area.

“Based on the design and information made available to ERM, we have concluded that the Nord Stream 2 project will have no significant effect on the ability of the Kurgalsky reserve to function as a Ramsar site. It will continue to support the habitats, species and processes for which it was designated,” ERM technical director Les Hatton said. “Developing a robust Biodiversity Action Plan will enable Nord Stream 2 to meet its obligations to international environmental standards compliance.”

The round table in St Petersburg enabled an open and broad discussion of the proposed strategy, in addition to providing Nord Stream 2 with relevant feedback. The next step for Nord Stream 2 will be developing a detailed Biodiversity Action Plan for the Kurgalsky reserve as a sustainable and long-term commitment. To ensure full adherence to the IFC PS, the study results and the proposed biodiversity action plan will be scrutinised by independent environmental consultants who have been working on the project's documentation since 2016.

The biodiversity action plan is a key component of the Environmental and Community Initiatives Strategy developed by Nord Stream 2 for the landfall in Russia. Nord Stream 2 aims to implement the plan in continued cooperation with relevant authorities and experts.



About Nord Stream 2

Nord Stream 2 is a planned pipeline through the Baltic Sea, which will transport natural gas over 1,200 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 design of the successful Nord Stream pipeline. With Europe's domestic gas production projected to halve in the next 20 years, Nord Stream 2's twin pipeline system will help Europe to meet its future gas import needs, with 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 CO₂ 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.

www.nord-stream2.com

About CJSC ECOPROJECT

CJSC ECOPROJECT is an environmental and nature conservation consultancy specialising in environmental support services. The company was established in 2000 and has successfully delivered more than 700 projects since then. It has extensive experience in performing comprehensive baseline assessment studies and environmental monitoring.

About ERM

ERM is the one of largest environmental consulting companies in the world, providing exclusively environmental, health, safety and social advisory services to developers, governments and financial institutions worldwide.

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