

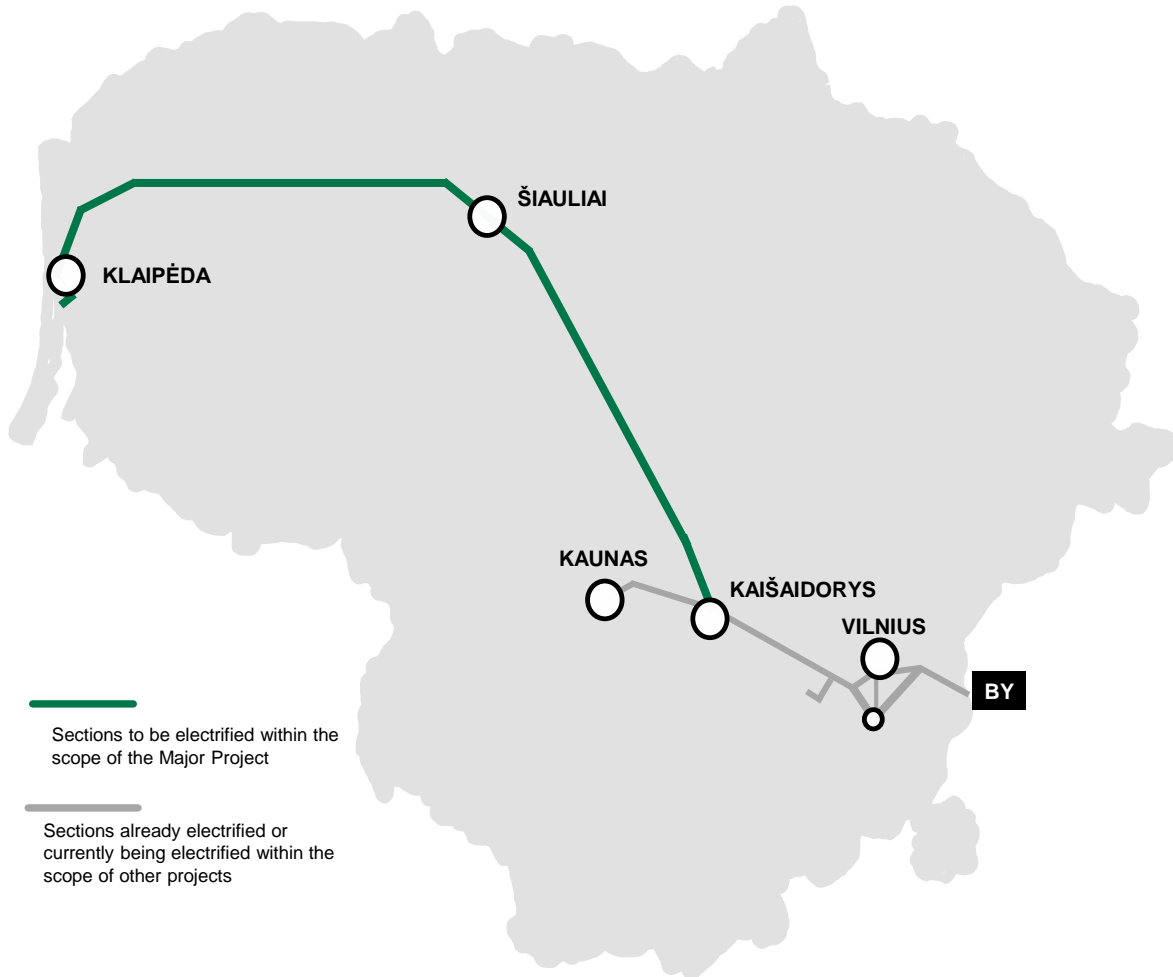


# Overcoming challenges to meet the requirements of SSCO relevant for major Lithuanian Railway Electrification Project

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# Project Overview



## Highlights of the Project

**Scope:** electrification of the section Kasiadorys-Klaipeda (Section)

### Activities:

- design and construction of catenary and power supply equipment
- design and construction of traction substations and autotransformers
- design and installation of power networks as well as connection of high voltage lines from the traction substations to national grid controlled by JSC Litgrid
- adaptation of railway signaling, traffic control and telecommunication equipment and systems
- other activities directly related with electrification of the section

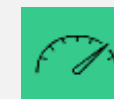
! Activities include **only works on an existing and operating railway line** (no works related to construction/straightening of the railway; no increase in traffic and speed)

**Results:** from 2023 Q4 infrastructure in place that will allow to shift from using fossil fuels to renewable energy sources within the main Lithuanian railway corridor

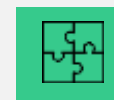
## Key Numbers



VALUE  
**316.8 M**



DESIGN SPEED  
**160 km/h**



SCOPE  
**320 km**



FUEL SAVINGS  
**-30%**



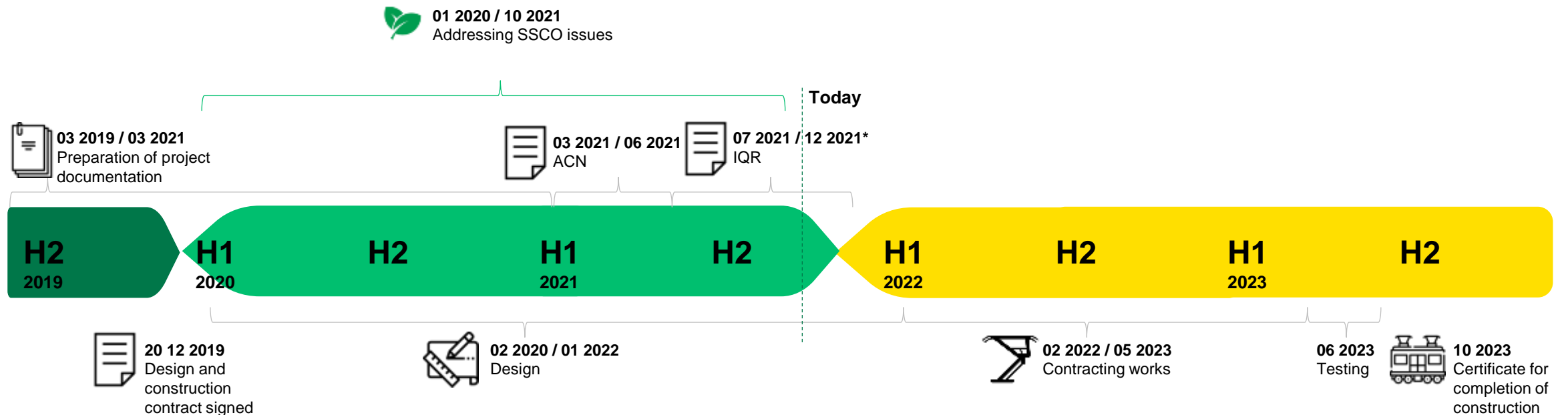
TERM  
**2023 Q4**



POLLUTION REDUCTION  
**150kt / year**

# Project implementation timeline

- **Physical implementation** of the Project is **separated from the EU funding allocation** to the project
- **JASPERS experts** (WAW office) **involved** in project documentation preparation **from the very early stage**
- **First discussion regarding** importance of requirements of **SSCO in early 2020**
- Addressing **SSCO issues in parallel with project approval** procedures

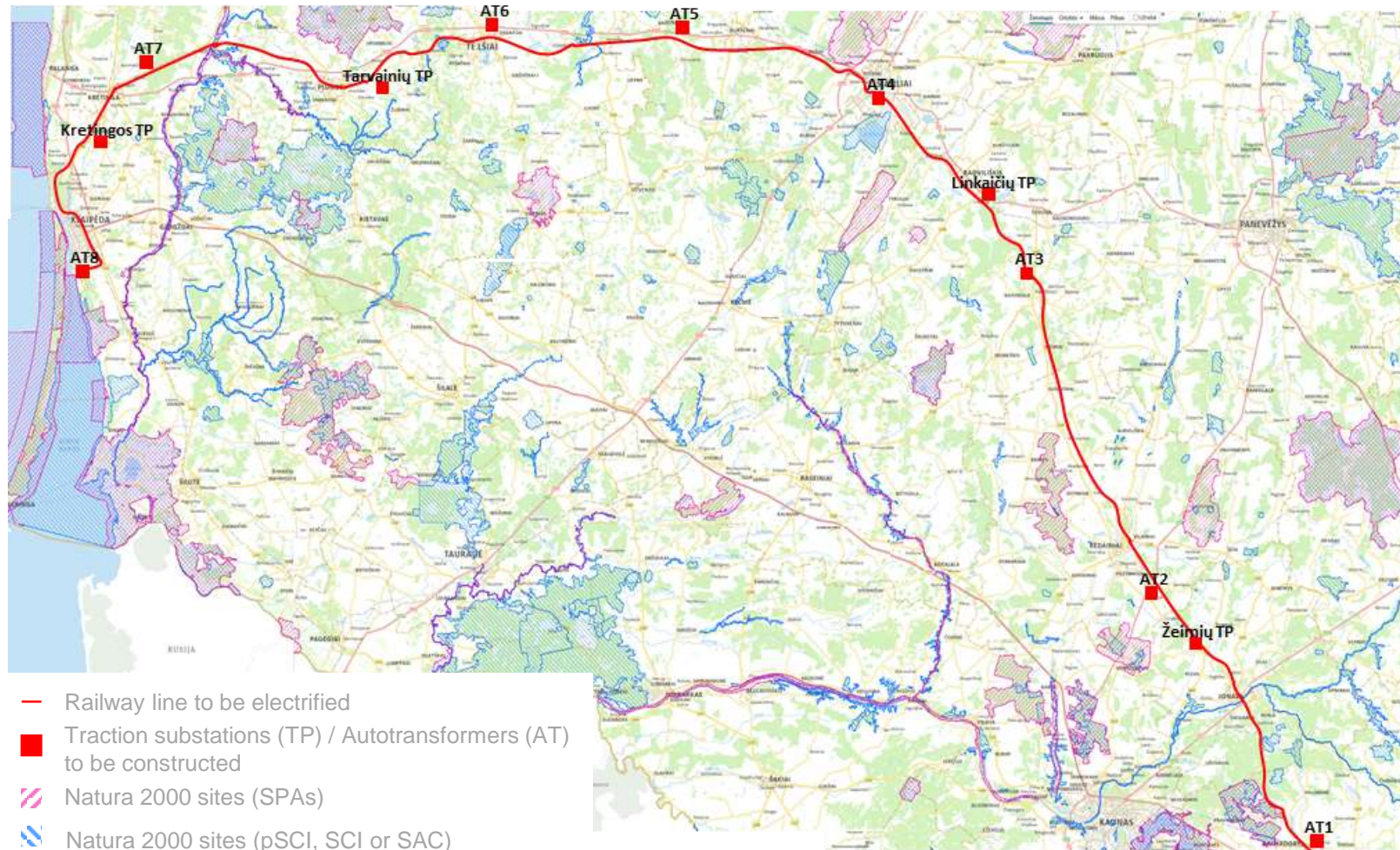


\* It is expected to receive positive IQR in December 2021

# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO



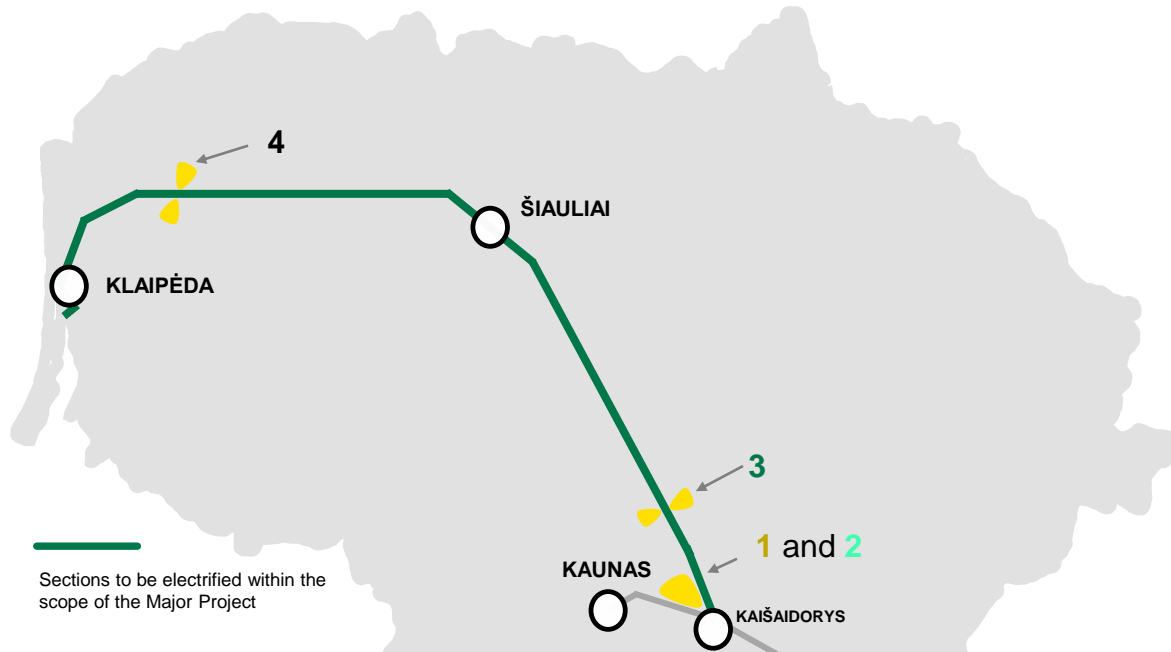
## 01 | Identification of Natura 2000 sites relevant for the project



- Historically, the **project was planned to be implemented in separate stages**
- **The significance** of the project's impact on the **Natura 2000 sites was assessed separately** by Lithuanian national competent authority, State Service for Protected Areas (SSPA)
- **By May 2019, 3 conclusions were issued:** planned economic activity (PEA) is **unlikely to have significant environmental impact on the Natura 2000 sites**
- **In early 2020**, upon receipt of indications that the requirements of SSCO may not be met, **it was decided to review the circumstances on which the conclusions were issued**
- **In June 2020** relevant information provided to DG Env

# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO

## 02 | Identification of a potentially problematic issues



By July 2020 in cooperation with JASPERS and DG Env issues identified:

- I. Establishment of SSCO obligatory to all relevant Natura 2000 sites
  - **Initial insights:** SSCO have to be established for Būdos-Pravieniškių forest complex (LTKAIB006)
  - **Envisaged next step:** SSPA agreed to set SSCO by Q3 2020
- II. Questionable quality of SSCO
  - **Initial insights:** SSCO may be considered to be not precise, not quantified, not referring to the attributes defining the condition of the habitats/species as good or bad
  - **Envisaged next step:** SSCO established are specific and quantifiable for each site, however direct cooperation between SSPA and DG Env is to be initiated in order to establish draft SSCO, which would meet the standard required
- III. Need to revise Natura 2000 screenings and to provide new conclusions regarding the significance of the impact of PEA
  - **Initial insights:** Natura 2000 screenings should be revised in view of the revised/established SSCO
  - **Envisaged next step:** SSPA agreed to revise Natura 2000 screenings after relevant SSCO will be revised/established

	Natura 2000 site	Code	PEA location	SSCO established	Conclusion issued after SSCO establishment
1	Būdos-Pravieniškių forest complex (SAC)	LTKAIB005	Borders	No	No
2	Būdos-Pravieniškių forest complex (SPAs)	LTKAIB006	Borders	Yes	Yes
3	Neris river (SAC)	LTVIN0009	Crosses	Yes	No
4	Salanta & Blendžiava rivers (SAC)	LTKRE0005	Crosses	Yes	Yes



# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO



## 03 | Revision of national standards how SSCO are established

### Approval process of SSCO of Natura 2000 sites:

- SSPA performs an analysis of Natura 2000 site: identifies habitats/species and status of their presence
- SSPA sets SSCO the targets and formulates SSCO
- SSCO are approved by the order of the Minister of Environment

**No changes in approval**

### Format of SSCO establishment included:

- **Initial format included:**
  - The area occupied by the habitat /species
  - The target (maintain / restore/ achieve the formation) depending on the status of the habitat/species
  - Maps of Natura 2000 site with targets indicated
- **New format supplemented with:**
  - Site-specific criteria for favourable conservation status of the habitat/species, that should be achieved

**Introduction of set of criteria for favourable conservation status**

# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO



## 03 | Revision of national standards how SSCO are established

Example of initial SSCO format: SSCO

No	Site name	Site code	Municipality	Boundaries of the site	Site-specific conservation objectives
183	Būdos ir Pravieniškių miškai	LTKAI0005	Kaišiadorys	Boundaries of the site, natural habitats and habitats of species are presented in Annex XX	To maintain favourable conservation status of the habitat 6270 *Fennoscandian lowland species-rich dry to mesic grasslands in the area of at least 0.7 ha.
					To maintain favourable conservation status of the habitat 6450 Northern boreal alluvial meadows in the area of at least 2 ha.
					To restore favourable conservation status of the habitat 6450 Northern boreal alluvial meadows in the area of at least 17.1 ha. ...

Area and target to be met

# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO

## 03 | Revision of national standards how SSCO are established

### Example of new SSCO format: SSCO + criteria for favorable conservation status (FCS)

No	Site name	Site code	Municipality	Boundaries of the site	Site-specific conservation objectives	Code for the criteria for FCS for the habitat type/species (see Tables 2–6)	Comments on target values for FCS at the local level
183	Būdos ir Pravieniškių miškai	LTKAI0005	Kaišiadorys	Boundaries of the site, natural habitats and habitats of species are presented in Annex XX	The cover of 6270 habitat type is estimated to 0,7 ha. The condition of the area is favourable. The SSCO is to maintain favourable conservation status of the habitat 6270 *Fennoscandian lowland species-rich dry to mesic grasslands in the area of at least 0.7 ha.	6270	6270.1. – recommended to revise every 6 year; 6270.4. – to sustain at least 6 characteristic species; 6270.5. – all shrubs should be removed within 6 years; 6270.6. – to eradicate Anthriscus sylvestris within 6 years.
					The total area of the habitat type 6450 in the SAC is 19.1 ha. Of these, 17.1 ha are in unfavourable condition. The SSCO is to maintain favourable conservation status of the habitat 6450 Northern boreal alluvial meadows in the area of at least 2 ha and to restore favourable conservation status in the area of at least 17.1 ha.	6450	6450.1. – recommended to revise every 6 year; 6450.3. – in the case of flood failure due to climate change, the restoration of the riverbed is recommended; 6450.7. – all shrubs should be removed; to achieve within 6 years; 6450.8. – to reduce coverage of Filipendula ulmaria, Urtica dioica and Epilobium ciliatum; to achieve within 6 years; 6450.11. – the aftermath can be extensively grazed.
					...		

Set of criteria for FCS for habitat 6270 to be met

Criteria for favourable conservation status for natural habitat type on local/site level				
No	Criteria	Units of measurement	Target value	Additional information
6270.1.	Area of the habitat in favourable conservation status	ha	Stable or increasing	Area may be increased due to achievement of favourable conservation status or formation of the habitats from potential habitat area <sup>1)</sup> .
6270.2.	Area of the habitat in unfavourable conservation status	ha	Decreasing or absent	Area can decrease due to achievement of favourable conservation status. Temporary increase can be only in the case of habitat formation from potential habitat area <sup>1)</sup> .
6270.3.	Typical species	Number of species / 100 m <sup>2</sup>	At least 4	Typical species: <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> , <i>A. stolonifera</i> , <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> , <i>Briza media</i> , <i>Carex carvi</i> , <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> , <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> , <i>Hypochaeris maculata</i> , <i>Leontodon autumnalis</i> , <i>L. hispidus</i> .
...				

Criteria for FCS for habitat 6270



# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO

## 04 | Consultations with DG Env regarding the new approach



### I. February 2021, initial technical consultation with the representatives of Dg Env, Jaspers, SSPA and the Ministry of Environment

- Initial presentation of the new SSCO format
- Consultation regarding technical aspects and details
- Agreement on action plan regarding the revision of SSCO for Natura 2000 sites relevant for the Project
  - Drafting updates of SSCO for LTKAI0005, LTKRE0005 and LTVIN0009 for all habitats and species (except fish species) by March
  - Drafting updates of SSCO for LTKRE0005, LTVIN0009 for fish's species by April
  - Drafting of SSCO for LTKAIB006 for bird's species by March
  - Official approval of SSCO (by the orders of the Minister of Environment) relevant for the Project by June



- Discussions on possibility to parallel project appraisal procedures (IQR) with the formal approval of SSCO due to the nature of the project
  - Only after a preliminary assessment of the project impact on relevant Natura 2000 sites according to draft versions of updated SSCO and after receiving indications from SSPA that the conclusion will not change
  - Complying the obligations to formally approve SSCO and update project relevant documentation till the end of the IQR

### II. Additional informal iterative rounds of consultations:

- Review of the draft versions
- Provision of comments and suggestions

**Result: common understanding of the acceptable solutions to be adopted**

# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO

## 05 | Approval of new SSCO and revision of SSPA conclusions



### I. Approval of new SSCO for Natura 2000 sites relevant

- August 2021, SSCO relevant for Būdos-Pravieniškių forest complex (SPAs) LTKAIB006 approved by the Order No. D1-641 of the Minister of Environment
- September 2021, SSCO relevant for Būdos-Pravieniškių forest complex (SAC) LTKAI0005, Neris river (SAC) LTVIN0009, and Salanta & Blendžiava rivers (SAC) LTKRE0005 approved by the Order No. D1-518 of the Minister of Environment

**Challenges:** approval process took longer than expected due to need of additional external experts to set SSCO for fish species

### II. Revision of SSPA conclusions whether project has significant environmental effects on the Natura 2000 sites

- September 2021, SSPA was repeatedly requested to assess the significance of the environmental impact of the Project by the Beneficiary
- October 2021, SSPA issued a revised conclusion that Project is unlikely to have significant environmental effects on the Natura 2000 sites

**Argumentation remained unchanged even after the new SSCO were established**

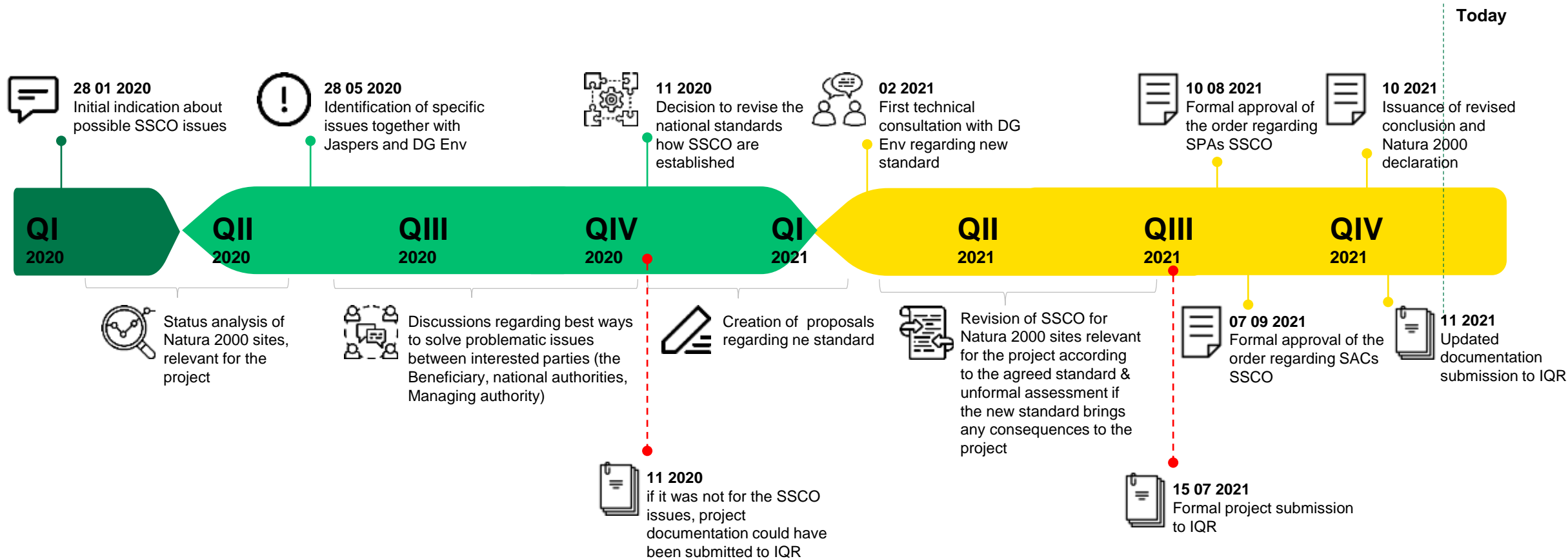
### III. Issue of an updated Natura 2000 declaration (Annex I)

- October 2021, SSPA issued an updated Natura 2000 declaration

### IV. Provision of updated SSPA conclusion and Natura 2000 declaration to IQR

# Path to compliance with the requirements of SSCO

## Summarizing the experience



# Lessons learned

## At Project level

### **The involvement of JASPERS experts from an early stage in project preparation is essential**

- SSCO issues were identified in early stage of Project's preparation
- A chain of mediation in search of the best and most effective solution based on good practices

### **Constant need of cooperation between the Beneficiary, national competent authorities and the Managing authority**

- Only through joint efforts it was possible to resolve SSCO related challenges relatively quickly
- Timely management of the risk that project approval procedure will take much longer than expected (or perhaps even the risk of losing funding)

### **Relatively low impact on Project approval procedures**

- As physical project implementation is separated from Project approval procedures no impact on final Project implementation term
- IQR procedure postponed for at least 6 month

## At national level

### **New standard for SSCO established**

- While setting SSCO for new Natura 2000 sites, the set of criteria for favourable conservation status will be expanded
- The risk of questionable quality of SSCO for the future infrastructure projects should be minimized



**Thank you**



# More Information

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**For info or further questions on this webinar please contact the JASPERS Networking Platform team:**

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