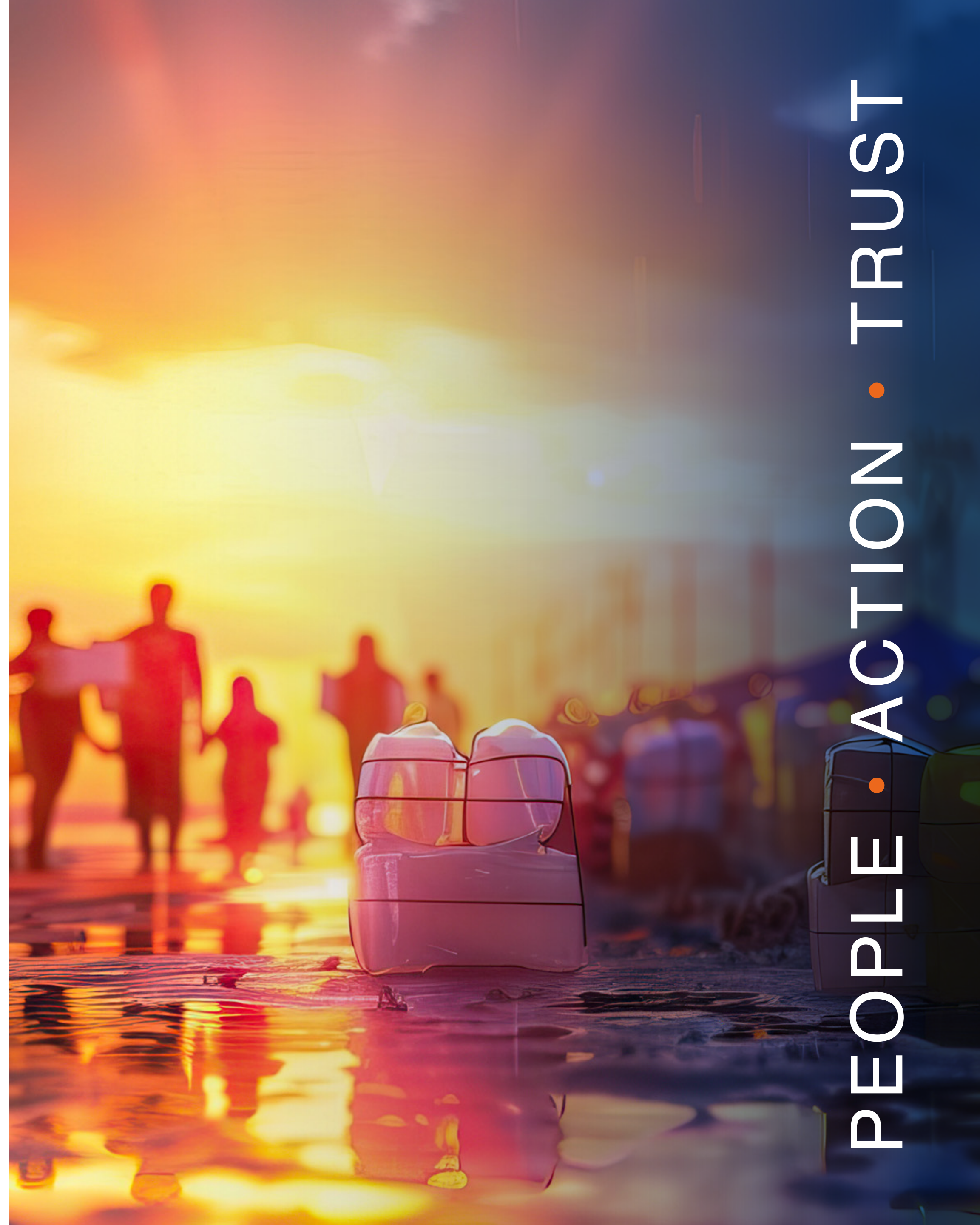




NICOLE Foundation Impact Report **2024**

Helping communities manage legacy contamination



PEOPLE • ACTION • TRUST

Welcome to the NICOLE Foundation's second annual Impact Report.

In the year since our founding, the NICOLE Foundation has undergone a remarkable evolution. What began with targeted, short-term interventions in 2023 has grown into a globally recognized force tackling some of the world's most complex environmental challenges. This report reflects that transformation—highlighting how our scope has expanded, how our model has adapted, and how our partnerships have deepened.

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Scaling complexity—and rising to meet it

2024 marked a turning point. We moved from modest-scale projects to highly complex, multidisciplinary efforts requiring broad collaboration and deep technical expertise. Among them, our work on the Kakhovka Reservoir project in Ukraine, delivered for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), required the coordination of cross-disciplinary experts—many operating within a conflict zone—demanding resilience, agility, and a steadfast commitment to impact.

Other assignments, including our engagement with the UN Environment Assembly, similarly required us to stretch our capacity and expand our network to deliver this critically important work. This year challenged us not only to think bigger, but to deliver more broadly.

Evolving our model: From volunteers to expert networks

This growth in scope and scale led to an important realization: our founding model—based solely on unpaid volunteerism—would no longer be sustainable for the work ahead.

To deliver on long-term, high-stakes projects, we expanded our delivery model to include network members who could provide expert programme content through a combination of co-funding, pro bono support, and highly discounted / non-commercial rates. We also expanded our network to include vital new capabilities such as stakeholder engagement, digital environments including digital data management, and post-conflict logistics.

What's most inspiring is how seamless this evolution has been. It has shown the strength of our global network, the resilience of our approach, and the trust our partners place in our ability to deliver under pressure.

A message of thanks

None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of our founding and executive teams. To each of you—thank you. Your dedication and resolve made 2024 a year of real, measurable impact.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to our partners—both those who benefited from our projects and those who made them possible. From last-minute mobilizations to pro bono contributions, your commitment has been extraordinary.

Together, we've proven that even the most complex legacy contamination challenges can be met with urgency, expertise, and hope.

If you would like to learn more—or become part of this growing movement—please visit us at www.nicolefound.org.



Johan De Fraye
Executive Director



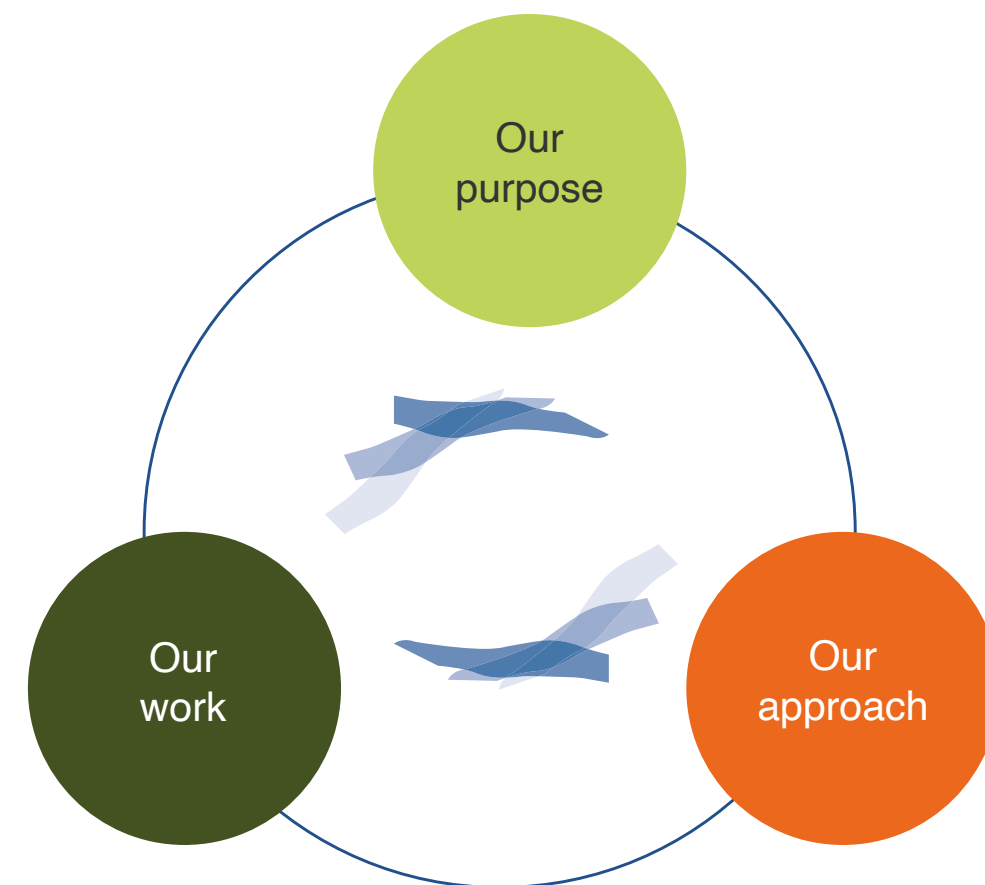
Al Hannum
Chair of the Board of Directors

Our mission and why it matters

Who we are

The NICOLE Foundation is a Belgian Private Foundation established in 2023 as a dedicated offshoot of NICOLE—a long-standing collective of professionals in the contaminated land sector representing industry, consultancies, and academia.

While we share common roots and values, the NICOLE Foundation is an independent legal entity, with its own mission, governance, and leadership. Our connection to NICOLE is maintained through board-level representation, but our work, purpose, and approach are uniquely our own.



Why we exist

The NICOLE Foundation was created to fill a critical gap: addressing complex legacy contamination in places where traditional mechanisms—governmental, financial, or technical—are insufficient or entirely absent.

We believe in the power of partnerships to drive sustainable environmental transformation. Our mission is to connect global expertise, resources, and community voices from our network to co-create solutions that restore ecosystems, protect public health, and build resilient futures.

Our work is guided by these core values:

Collaboration:

We believe that partnerships unlock the greatest impact.

Excellence:

We pursue the most effective and innovative solutions possible.

Accountability:

We are responsible to the communities we serve and the donors who entrust us.

Credibility:

We uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and technical quality.

How we work

We deliver our mission through an extensive global network of experts, partners, and donors. Our support ranges from:

- Strategic roadmap development
- Capacity-building initiatives
- The design of complex multi-media risk reduction strategies.

By connecting the right knowledge with the right need, we transform legacy contamination into opportunities for renewal.

Our Global Footprint

From Latin America to Eastern Europe, the NICOLE Foundation is working where the need for practical technical solutions is most urgent.

The map below highlights the locations of our 2024 projects—each one a collaboration between local communities, global experts, and international partners. These initiatives reflect not only the diversity of environmental challenges we address, but also the power of partnerships to deliver meaningful, measurable change across borders.



Ukraine

Developing rapid-assessment tools to estimate environmental impacts, response actions, and potential costs from conflict in Ukraine.

Partners: UNEP



Ukraine

Delivering scientific data and local capacity to guide post-disaster recovery following the Nova Kakhovka dam breach.

Partners: UNEP, ERM Foundation, TAUW Foundation



Peru

Providing expert guidance to assess damage and support recovery after one of Peru's worst ecological disasters.

Partners: MINAM



Global Conflict Zones

Designing UNEP's roadmap for global guidance on tracking environmental harm in conflict-affected areas.

Partners: UNEP, TAUW Foundation



2024 Highlights – Our impact in action

Expert support on the Callao Oil Spill, Peru

Since the beginning of 2023, the NICOLE Foundation has supported the Peruvian Ministry of the Environment (MINAM) in assessing damages and advising on remedial strategies following the catastrophic oil spill off the coast of Callao.

This spill—deemed by Peru’s Environmental Assessment and Control Agency as one of the country’s **greatest ecological disasters**—impacted:

- Over **1,100 km² of marine area**,
- More than **1,700 km² of beach and coastal zones**, and
- More than **500 hectares of protected natural reserves**, including parts of the Guaneras Islands and the Reserved Zone of Ancón.

Our expert engagement concluded in 2024, having contributed critical insight toward recovery efforts and long-term remediation planning.

Supported Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs):



🇺🇦 Kakhovka Reservoir Sediment Assessment, Ukraine

Following the **breach of the Nova Kakhovka dam** in June 2023—an event with severe environmental, economic, and humanitarian consequences—the NICOLE Foundation was engaged by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to lead a **preliminary environmental assessment of exposed upstream sediments**.



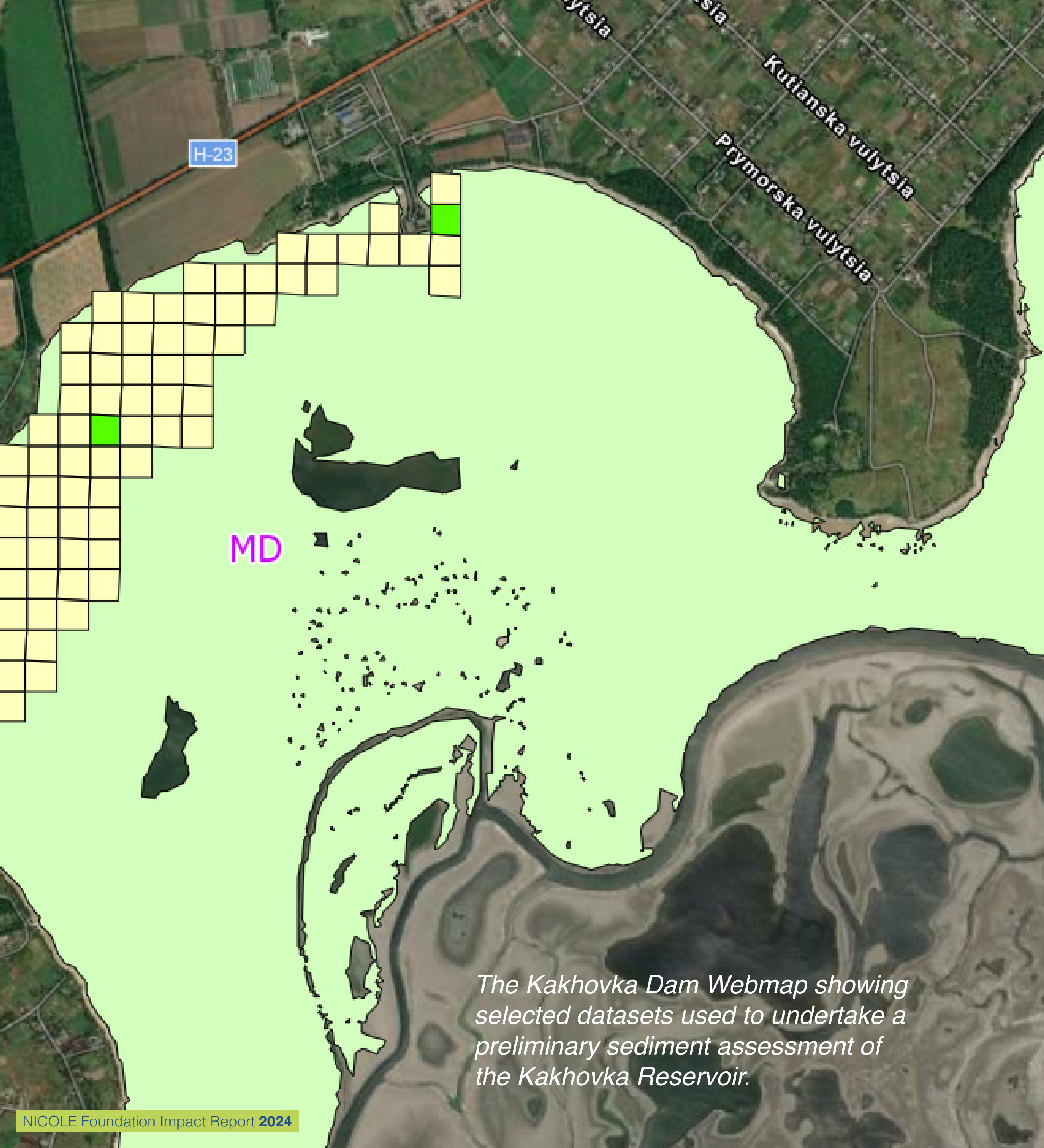
With more than **40 environmental hotspots** identified in the affected floodplain, our team developed a targeted soil sampling programme to address critical data gaps on contamination and toxicological risks.

This work supports:

- Local administrations in **evidence-based recovery planning**,
- Monitoring efforts by the **State Environment Inspectorate**, and
- Assessment of risks related to potential **agricultural reuse of contaminated sediments**.

Our efforts directly contribute to the broader UN Post-Disaster Needs Assessment and ongoing UNEP-led environmental recovery efforts.

Supported Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs):



The Kakhovka Dam Webmap showing selected datasets used to undertake a preliminary sediment assessment of the Kakhovka Reservoir.

Estimating environmental impact from conflict

In response to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the NICOLE Foundation supported UNEP's **4th Rapid Needs Assessment** by developing a **high-level methodology** to estimate the environmental impacts of war-related damage.

This tool enables timely and consistent evaluation of evolving environmental threats across conflict-affected zones and enhances UNEP's ability to prioritize and respond effectively.

Supported Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs):



UNEA Resolution 6/12: Implementation Plan for Post-Conflict Environmental Recovery

In February 2024, the **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6)** adopted **Resolution 6/12**—a landmark commitment to improving environmental assistance and recovery in conflict-affected regions.

UNEP tasked the NICOLE Foundation with developing the **Implementation Plan** to guide the creation of Technical Guidance for data collection in these contexts. Our Implementation Plan includes:

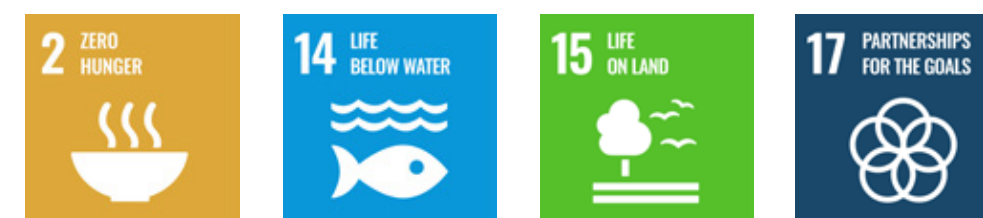
- A **comprehensive stakeholder engagement programme**,
- A **data storage and management platform**, and
- Detailed **technical guidance on environmental data collection** across multiple media types.

This work will help UNEP and its partners:

- Apply a **standardised, evidence-based approach** to post-conflict environmental monitoring,
- Equip **donors and decision-makers** with tools for strategic planning,
- Enable **civil society and government actors** to collect and store data effectively, and
- Support **states** in developing risk-informed approaches to prioritizing and implementing recovery.

As part of this initiative, the Foundation also developed a **preliminary prioritization matrix**—a user-friendly tool to guide data collection priorities based on conflict stage, intensity, and affected environmental media. This will be refined further in the next phase of the Technical Guidance.

Supported Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs):



2024 Foundation metrics

Valuing time, driving impact

In our first full year of operations, the NICOLE Foundation was powered by the generous contributions of dedicated individuals across our network.

In our establishment year (2023), approximately **75% of pro bono hours** were dedicated to essential internal systems, organizational development, and administrative set-up (General & Administrative). This foundational work laid the groundwork for our long-term vision: to direct most volunteer time toward project delivery and field impact. We're pleased to report that this year, **81% of pro bono contributions** were focused directly on delivering impactful project work—marking a significant shift toward our mission in action.

Board activity and governance

In 2024, the Foundation held **two Board meetings**, with a third originally planned for December, rescheduled to January 2025 due to scheduling conflicts.

This year also marked a transition within our leadership. **Olivier Maurer**, one of the founding voices behind the NICOLE Foundation's formation, stepped down from his position as Board Member. Olivier played a pivotal role in our early development, bringing energy, vision, and continuity from our origins within NICOLE. We thank him sincerely for his invaluable contribution.

Date	Board members present	Board members absent/excused
23 January	6	2
22 March	7	1

Welcoming new expertise to support delivery

In 2024, the NICOLE Foundation welcomed Emil Filc to the Executive Team, bringing vital expertise in project management and controls at a time when the complexity and scale of our operations were rapidly expanding. Emil has worked as an environmental consultant and program manager for over 20 years and has experience executing large remedial projects across the globe. Emil's contribution has strengthened our ability to deliver high-impact work with precision, agility, and purpose.

“Joining the NICOLE Foundation has been a deeply rewarding experience. It's rare to find an organization that blends the technical excellence of an amazing team with meaningful projects that have such a clear sense of purpose. I'm proud to be part of the team and contribute to work that will have both immediate and long-term impact.”



Emil Filc
Project Management & Controls, Executive Team

Partners in Purpose

2024 marked a milestone for the NICOLE Foundation: our first year securing **direct project funding**, expanding beyond our foundational support from the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.

We are deeply grateful to the **ERM Foundation**, the **TAUW Foundation** and **DEME** for their generous and enthusiastic support. Their contributions enabled us to assemble a highly experienced project team, elevating the quality and reach of our work on two major UNEP-led initiatives.

Beyond financial support, our efforts were made possible by the dedication of committed partners and their teams—some of whom generously contributed their time pro bono or at reduced rates. Their personal commitment and enthusiasm reflect a shared conviction in the urgency and importance of our mission—and for that, we are deeply grateful.

Together, these partnerships made it possible to deliver real progress in some of the world’s most challenging environmental contexts.

Organization	Type of support	Nationality
Project expertise		
ERM	Project expertise	United Kingdom
TAUW	Project expertise	Netherlands
Liljemark Consulting	Project expertise	Sweden
Institute for Climate Resilient Agriculture	Project expertise	Ukraine
Corporación Ambiental de México (CAM)	Project expertise	Mexico
DND Biotech	Project expertise	Italy
ALS	Project expertise	Czech Republic
Aquaterrasana	Project expertise	France
Sustainable capitalists	Project expertise	USA
Agile consultants	Project expertise	USA
ADE	Project expertise	Australia
Buvé Consultancy	Project expertise	Belgium
Visser-Westerweele consultancy	Project expertise	Netherlands

Organization	Type of support	Nationality
Operations and project support		
NICOLE	Structural funding	Netherlands
ERM Foundation	Project funding	United Kingdom
TAUW Foundation	Project funding	Netherlands
LJE Marketing (Lisa Elliott)	Operations	United Kingdom
Earthsoft	Project funding	USA
Esri	Project funding	Belgium
DEME	Structural funding	Belgium
Baker&McKenzie	Operations	Belgium
UNEP	Project expertise	Kenya

Conclusion: Moving forward, together

2024 was a year of transformation—of scaling complexity, deepening partnerships, and turning purpose into action. From conflict zones to coastal ecosystems, the NICOLE Foundation brought expertise where it was needed most, thanks to the commitment of our global network.

We are deeply grateful to all those who have walked with us on this journey—volunteers, donors, partners, and supporters. Your belief in collaborative, science-driven solutions is what makes this work possible.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain driven by a single conviction: **together, we can turn even the most complex environmental challenges into opportunities for renewal and resilience.**

Want to be part of the solution?

Whether you're an expert, a donor, or a mission-aligned partner, there's a place for you with the NICOLE Foundation.

Join us in advancing science-driven, community-focused solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.



bonjour@nicolefound.org

Remylaan 4C Bus 3
3018 Leuven, Belgium

nicolefound.org

