



**NICOLE**  
**FOUNDATION**

# NICOLE Foundation Impact Report **2025**

**Because every community deserves  
a clean, healthy environment to thrive.**



PEOPLE • ACTION • TRUST



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# Welcome to the NICOLE Foundation's 2025 Impact Report.

In many parts of the world, environmental risks escalate during conflict, disaster, and instability – where contamination, damaged infrastructure, and limited data delay response and prolong harm to communities and ecosystems.

Too often, environmental assessment begins only after a crisis has passed.

The NICOLE Foundation exists to change that.

We connect global expertise with local partners to support earlier assessment, informed decision-making, and practical recovery – mobilising expertise where it matters most.

In 2025, we strengthened this approach through new partnerships, expanded geographic engagement, and our Associate Network, enhancing our ability to respond in complex environments.

Our work has spanned Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean, with a continued focus on building local capacity so that impact continues long after our direct involvement ends.

This progress is made possible by our partners, Associate Network members, and contributors who share their expertise – often on a pro bono basis – to support communities facing significant environmental challenges.

We thank you for your continued support.



**Johan De Fraye**  
Executive Director



**Al Hannum**  
Chair of the Board of Directors

# 2025 impact at a glance

In 2025, the NICOLE Foundation expanded its global reach, strengthened its expert network, and delivered technical support in complex and often constrained environments.

## Global reach

20



countries represented by our members



3

new project locations

3



conflict or disaster affected regions supported during active crises

## Mobilising expertise

13



Strategic Allies and partner organisations

29



Associate Network applicants

15+

Partner/support organisations

## Projects delivered

6

technical projects and programmes

11

environmental assessments, studies, or technical tools developed

## Time and expertise

3,621

hours of expert contribution

65%

delivered pro bono or at reduced rates – reflecting specialist support rarely accessible in these contexts

## Capacity building

3

local institutions supported through knowledge transfer

39

government agencies, NGOs, or local institutions engaged

## Priority areas

- ▶ Post-conflict environmental recovery
- ▶ Contaminated land and water
- ▶ Hazardous debris and waste management
- ▶ Environmental monitoring and data systems

## 2025 in context

2025 marked an important step in the Foundation's evolution, reflecting a growing ability to connect technical expertise, international partnerships, and local collaboration in support of environmental recovery efforts worldwide.

# Mobilising expertise where it matters most

The environmental challenges addressed by the NICOLE Foundation arise in complex settings – where critical infrastructure is damaged, access is restricted, and environmental data is incomplete or unsafe to collect.

In these environments, conventional delivery models struggle to respond with the speed, flexibility, and specialisation required. The result is a persistent gap between where expertise exists and where it is urgently needed.

## A more flexible approach

The Foundation's Associate Network was developed to bridge this gap.

The network brings together:

- **Project-Ready Experts** supporting technical delivery
- **Strategic Allies** strengthening partnerships and reach

This model enables the Foundation to assemble multidisciplinary teams, tailored to each context and capable of operating under challenging conditions.

## Why it works

By combining international expertise with local knowledge, the Associate Network enables:

- faster, more targeted mobilisation
- technically robust and context-relevant input
- stronger collaboration with local partners
- continuity through local capacity building

## Scaling capability

The Associate Network marks a shift from a responsive organisation to a scalable platform – mobilising expertise where it matters most, and ensuring it reaches communities when timing, context, and precision are critical.

More information about the Associate Network can be found here:  
[www.nicolefound.org/associate-network](http://www.nicolefound.org/associate-network)

# Our Global Footprint

Across different regions and environmental contexts, the Foundation's projects are combining international expertise and local collaboration to assess risks, strengthen capacity, and support practical recovery.

## Havana, Cuba

Working with partners to explore landfill gas valorisation as a sustainable energy solution while addressing dust and waste challenges.

**Partners:** Pollux Consulting, Cricket

## Peru

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

**Partners:** MINAM

## Estonia

Working with partners to support clean-up of historical contamination and strengthen long-term environmental recovery

**Partners:** ERM

## Ukraine

Working with partners to support environmental assessment, recovery, and risk reduction in conflict-affected areas

- Developing rapid-assessment tools to estimate environmental impacts, response actions, and potential costs from conflict in Ukraine.
- Sediment assessment and local capacity building to guide post-disaster recovery following the Nova Kakhovka dam breach.
- Strengthening asbestos debris management in conflict-affected areas
- Development of environmental standards for humanitarian demining

**Partners:** UNEP, ERM Foundation, TAUW Foundation, FAO & Swiss Development Corporation

## Northeast Syria

Providing technical expertise to help map, assess and respond to widespread oil spillovers affecting water and agricultural land.

**Partners:** Whole of Syria WASH Cluster, RVO

## Global

UNEA Resolution 6/12: Proof of concept for state-of-the-art technical guidance on environmental data collection in conflict-affected areas.

UNEA Resolution 6/12: Implementation Plan for post-conflict environmental recovery

**Partners:** UNEP, ERM Foundation, TAUW Foundation



# 2025 Highlights – impact in action

## UNEP technical guidance for environmental data collection in conflict zones

### Impact snapshot

- Advanced efforts to strengthen environmental recovery planning in conflict-affected regions.
- Supported more consistent, science-based environmental data collection during and after conflict.
- Strengthened collaboration between technical experts, governments, and international organisations.

In conflict-affected settings, damaged infrastructure and restricted access make environmental data difficult – and often dangerous – to collect. Yet without reliable data, risks cannot be prioritised and recovery is delayed.

The Foundation contributed to the early development of technical guidance for environmental data collection in these environments, including:

- risk-based data collection
- environmental sampling and monitoring
- data management and sharing

The approach was presented at the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in Nairobi, Kenya, supporting international efforts to establish more consistent, evidence-based environmental assessment in conflict zones.

### Supported Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



CASE STUDY



# Oil spill assessment and response planning, Northeast Syria

## Impact snapshot

- Improved understanding of environmental and public health risks linked to oil contamination.
- Strengthened local capacity for environmental monitoring and spill response planning.
- Supported more informed decision-making to help protect water, land, and communities.

In Northeast Syria, damaged oil infrastructure continues to release pollutants into soil and water, creating ongoing risks for communities.

The Foundation provided technical support to strengthen oil spill risk assessment and response planning by:

- analysing limited datasets alongside local field observations
- supporting risk-based assessment approaches
- advising on practical response planning
- contributing to longer-term environmental strategies

By combining technical expertise with local knowledge, the project improved decision-making and strengthened the capacity for ongoing environmental monitoring and response.

## Supported Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Courtesy of:  
Environmental Monitoring Office Hasakah  
Environment Directorate  
Environmental Monitoring Office Qamishli  
Environment Directorate  
Gezira County Environment Agency

# Landfill improvement and gas valorisation, Havana Cuba

## Impact snapshot

- Identified opportunities to reduce landfill-related pollution and environmental risks.
- Explored landfill gas recovery to support local energy resilience and climate goals.
- Established a technical foundation for future investment in improved waste management.

In Havana, pressure on waste infrastructure has increased environmental risks, including unmanaged landfill gas emissions.

The Foundation conducted a pre-feasibility study to assess practical improvements and opportunities for gas capture and utilisation, including:

- site and operational review
- gas generation assessment
- identification of improvement options
- stakeholder engagement

Delivered entirely on a pro bono basis, the study provides a foundation for future investment in improved waste management and resource recovery.

## Supported Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Landfill, Havana Cuba

# Our mission and why it matters

**The NICOLE Foundation is an independent public charity, building on the expertise of the wider NICOLE network to address complex environmental challenges.**

Responding effectively requires technical expertise, strong partnerships, and the ability to mobilise the right people and knowledge at the right time.

## Why we exist

In many regions, pollution persists not because solutions are unknown, but because the systems required to address it – regulatory, financial, or technical – are insufficient or absent.

This is particularly true in conflict-affected, disaster-impacted, and legacy industrial contexts.

The Foundation works to help close this gap.

## Our work

### We focus on:

- contaminated land and groundwater
- post-conflict and post-disaster recovery
- environmental monitoring and risk assessment
- water and sanitation challenges
- ecosystem restoration
- localisation and capacity building

Our approach combines global expertise with local knowledge to deliver practical, evidence-based solutions that continue beyond individual projects.

## Our guiding principles

- ▶ **Collaboration**
- ▶ **Technical excellence**
- ▶ **Accountability**
- ▶ **Transparency**

## Why this matters now

Environmental risks increasingly intersect with conflict, climate pressures, and fragile systems – requiring approaches that are both technically robust and adaptable in complex settings.

# From projects to global practice

NICOLE Foundation's work extends beyond individual projects.

Through partnerships with UNEP and others, the Foundation is contributing to the development of practical approaches for environmental assessment in complex settings – focused on tools, data frameworks, and decision-making methods.

These approaches are tested through real-world application. Projects delivered by the Foundation provide practical insights that strengthen emerging methodologies, while shared frameworks improve consistency across regions.

Crucially, it enables knowledge developed in one region to be adapted and applied in others – multiplying the impact of each project beyond its original context.

As global interest grows, this approach has the potential to support more consistent, scalable environmental recovery across multiple regions.



# Governance and delivery

The NICOLE Foundation operates through a collaborative delivery model that combines global expertise, strong partnerships, and local engagement.

The Associate Network strengthens the Foundation's ability to mobilise multidisciplinary expertise while maintaining a lean organisational structure. Much of the Foundation's work continues to be supported in large part by pro bono contributions.

## Governance highlights

Strong governance and transparency remain central to the Foundation's work.

### During 2025:

- Two Board meetings held
- Anneli Liljemark replaced Wouter Gevaerts as the statutory representative of NICOLE on the Foundation's Board.

The Board sincerely thanks Wouter for his contribution as a co-founder of the Foundation and wishes him well for the future.

We also warmly welcome Anneli as the new representative.

## About Anneli

Anneli has been actively involved with NICOLE for more than 20 years. She has more than 30 years of experience in contaminated sites, urban redevelopment, and strategic studies across the Nordic region.

Commenting on her appointment, Anneli said:

“I am very impressed by the development of the NICOLE Foundation since its establishment. Even at this early stage, the Foundation is already contributing to projects that make a tangible and meaningful difference”

The Board and Executive Team continue to guide the Foundation's development, ensuring high standards of accountability, credibility, and technical excellence.



**Anneli Liljemark**

NICOLE Foundation board representative

# Moving forward, together

Recent progress demonstrates what is possible when technical expertise, local knowledge, and shared purpose align.

## Priorities for the year ahead

- ▶ **Scaling the Associate Network**  
Expand the global network of experts and Strategic Allies.
- ▶ **Advancing technical guidance and tools**  
Continue developing practical methodologies that support environmental monitoring, risk assessment, and recovery planning.
- ▶ **Expanding geographic engagement**  
Build partnerships in additional regions facing significant environmental risks.
- ▶ **Strengthening partnerships**  
Deepen collaboration with governments, international organisations, research institutions, and mission-aligned partners.

We welcome collaboration with partners and experts committed to mobilising expertise where it matters most.



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## Want to be part of the solution?

The Foundation's work is supported by a growing network of partners, contributors, and technical experts.

Together, this network connects expertise with need – enabling practical environmental solutions in regions where they are most urgently required.

### **Partner with us or fund our work**

Support practical, science-based solutions where they are most urgently needed.

**Learn more:**

[Partner with us on pollution solutions | NICOLE Foundation](#)

### **Join the Associate Network**

Contribute your expertise to environmental recovery projects worldwide.

**Learn more:**

[Associate Experts Network | Join NICOLE Foundation's Mission](#)

Restoring environments. Protecting communities.  
Mobilising expertise where it matters most.

Because every community deserves a clean, healthy environment to thrive.