

Partnership & Applied Cooperation

P&D

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What War Leaves Behind: Soil, Water, and the Future

For three days in Prague, researchers and practitioners from Europe, North America, Africa, Asia, and Ukraine will meet to discuss how modern warfare affects soils, freshwater systems, ecosystems, agriculture, and public health — and how international cooperation can turn fragmented evidence into future research and recovery strategies.

Prague, 15-17 October 2026
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Conference Venue

Novotného lávka 200/5, Prague 1.



No single institution knows how to solve this problem

The environmental consequences of war do not fit within the boundaries of a single discipline, institution, technology, or country.

Contaminated soils, damaged freshwater systems, unexploded ordnance, destroyed industrial sites, altered sediments, disrupted agriculture, toxic exposure, ecosystem change and long-term health effects form interconnected systems.

Understanding these systems requires more than academic research.

It requires satellite observation and GIS.
Field access and local knowledge.
Sampling and laboratory analysis.
Hydrology and geophysics.
Remote sensing and autonomous systems.
Mine action and safe land release.
Environmental monitoring and data infrastructure.
Toxicology and public health.
Remediation technologies.
Engineering.
Agricultural recovery.
And, above all, the ability to connect these different forms of knowledge.

No university, company, government agency or international organization possesses the complete solution.

The starting point of this conference is therefore not certainty.

It is the recognition of the scale of what we do not yet know — and the need to work on that uncertainty together.

Not academia on one side and practice on the other

The P&D Conference is not organized around a hierarchy in which researchers produce knowledge and everyone else listens, finances, or implements it.

That model is poorly suited to the problem we are trying to address.

A researcher may understand contaminant behaviour but lack access to the affected territory.

A satellite company may detect changes that cannot yet be interpreted environmentally.

A GIS specialist may integrate datasets whose reliability remains uncertain.

A demining operator may know exactly where access is impossible and why.

A laboratory may identify compounds that existing monitoring programmes were never designed to detect.

A remediation company may understand what information is actually required before an intervention can begin.

A specialist from Ukraine, Sudan, Vietnam or another affected region may know conditions that are invisible in international datasets.

Each participant sees a different part of the system.

The purpose of the conference is to bring these parts together.

A working environment for unresolved problems

War-related environmental contamination is not a mature field with an established sequence of methods and universally accepted solutions.

In many cases, even the basic questions remain open:

- What should be measured?
- Where should sampling begin?
- Which pollutants are likely to be present?
- Which signals can be detected remotely?
- How should satellite observations be connected with field measurements?
- How reliable are historical datasets?
- How can contaminated or mined territories be investigated safely?
- How do pollutants move between soil, groundwater, rivers and sediments?
- How should military, industrial and civilian sources of contamination be distinguished?
- How can environmental effects be separated from pre-war background conditions?
- When is land actually safe to return to agriculture?
- What evidence is sufficient to justify remediation?
- Which monitoring systems should remain after reconstruction begins?
- How can fragmented observations be transformed into decisions?

These are not questions for one profession.

They require cooperation between people who normally meet only at the edges of their respective fields.

From detection to recovery

We are particularly interested in organizations working anywhere along the practical chain:

Detection → Mapping → Access → Measurement → Interpretation → Risk Assessment → Remediation → Monitoring → Recovery

Relevant areas include:

Earth observation, GIS and environmental intelligence

Satellite imagery, SAR, remote sensing, spatial analysis, geospatial AI, change detection, mapping platforms, environmental data integration and decision-support systems.

Drones, robotics and autonomous systems

Aerial mapping, LiDAR, photogrammetry, hazardous-area inspection, autonomous surface and underwater vehicles, remote sensing in inaccessible environments.

Humanitarian demining and UXO

Survey, detection, land release, mechanical and robotic clearance, marine UXO, geophysical detection and the transition from cleared territory to environmental assessment and civilian use.

Soil and contaminated-land investigation

Site characterization, hydrogeology, geophysics, sampling strategies, contaminated soil and groundwater, military and industrial contamination, environmental risk assessment.

Freshwater and aquatic systems

Rivers, reservoirs, groundwater, drinking-water sources, sediments, coastal systems, water-quality sensors, hydrological monitoring and satellite-based water assessment.

Laboratories and field analysis

Environmental chemistry, toxicology, portable analytical systems, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, explosives residues, dioxins, PFAS, radiological contamination and emerging contaminants.

Environmental remediation

Soil and groundwater remediation, sediment management, contaminated-site recovery, nature-based approaches, industrial-site rehabilitation and long-term monitoring.

Agriculture and land restoration

Return of cleared or contaminated land to agricultural use, soil quality, food-chain risks, irrigation water, land productivity and monitoring after remediation.

Public health and exposure

Environmental exposure pathways, occupational risks, drinking water, food systems, epidemiology and the connection between environmental measurements and human consequences.

Data architecture and new research infrastructure

Systems capable of combining satellite observations, GIS layers, field measurements, laboratory results, historical evidence, health information and changing conditions over time.

Conflict-affected regions are represented in the process

An important feature of the conference is direct participation by researchers, specialists and representatives connected with conflict-affected regions.

Current conference work includes contexts such as **Ukraine, Vietnam, Sudan and other territories affected by war and military activity**.

This creates an unusual opportunity.

A discussion about a technology does not have to remain hypothetical.

It can begin with a real territory, a real environmental problem, incomplete real-world data and people who understand the local context.

The objective is not to present affected regions as abstract “case studies”.

The objective is to create conditions in which local knowledge, international expertise and technological capability can meet on equal terms.

For companies and applied organizations, this can provide a path toward understanding where their technologies may genuinely be useful, what adaptations are required, who potential regional partners may be, and what responsible pilot projects could be developed.

We are looking for collaborators, not conventional sponsors

Financial support is welcome and important.

But **partnership does not have to begin with money.**

An organization may contribute through:

- technology;
- datasets or imagery;
- analytical capacity;
- laboratory work;
- GIS or visualization;
- field equipment;
- environmental sensors;
- methodological expertise;
- access to specialist software;
- technical personnel;
- regional experience;
- training;
- support for participants from affected regions;
- development of a pilot study;
- participation in a joint working group;
- project design;
- or direct financial support.

In many cases, the most valuable first question is simply:

What difficult problem could we investigate together?

What a company can gain from participating

The conference is not a trade fair and does not promise procurement contracts.

It offers something different.

Organizations can meet people who understand the territories where future environmental assessment and recovery will take place.

They can encounter research questions before those questions have been reduced to formal tenders or narrowly defined projects.

They can learn where existing technologies succeed — and where they fail.

They can identify missing measurements, missing datasets and missing tools.

They can explore the adaptation of existing technologies to environments affected by war.

They can develop relationships with researchers, local specialists, laboratories, field organizations and institutions from affected regions.

And they can participate in the formation of future pilot studies, research programmes and international project consortia.

For organizations entering new regions or new areas of environmental recovery, this kind of early interaction can be more valuable than conventional promotion.

Technology is part of the intellectual discussion

We do not regard technology providers as external to the research process.

A new sensing method may change what can be observed.

A new satellite constellation may change the temporal resolution of environmental evidence.

A portable analytical instrument may change the logic of sampling.

An autonomous vehicle may make previously inaccessible territory measurable.

A GIS architecture may reveal relationships that remain invisible in disconnected datasets.

A demining technology may determine whether environmental investigation is physically possible at all.

A remediation technology may expose weaknesses in the way the original investigation was designed.

Tools do not merely answer questions. They can change which questions it becomes possible to ask.

For this reason, technically serious companies and applied organizations are invited to participate in substantive conference discussions.

Different knowledge, equal seriousness

We do not distinguish between participants according to whether their institutional address is a university, company, laboratory, NGO, public authority or field organization.

We distinguish between contributions that help us understand the problem and those that do not.

A strong contribution may therefore be:

- a research result;
- a field case;
- a failed approach and the lessons learned from it;
- a technology demonstrated against a real environmental problem;
- an unusual dataset;
- a methodological problem;
- an operational limitation;
- a comparison of technologies;
- a monitoring concept;
- a proposed pilot study;
- or an unresolved question that requires a new combination of expertise.

Practical experience is not intellectually inferior to academic knowledge.

And academic knowledge is not useful simply because it is academic.

Both must survive contact with the real problem.

From conference discussion to joint projects

The conference is intended to create cooperation beyond the three days in Prague.

Potential outcomes include:

- joint field investigations;
- technology demonstration projects;
- satellite and GIS-based assessments;
- comparative studies across conflict regions;
- monitoring-system design;
- environmental baseline reconstruction;
- contamination mapping;
- mine-action/environmental assessment integration;
- soil and freshwater investigations;
- remediation feasibility studies;
- regional pilot projects;
- shared methodological protocols;
- environmental data platforms;
- international research and implementation consortia;
- and future grant or investment proposals.

Not every discussion will become a project.

That is expected.

The purpose is to create an environment where promising combinations can be identified early and developed seriously.

Cooperation formats

Partnerships can be designed around the actual contribution of the organization rather than a conventional sponsorship hierarchy.

Applied Technology Partner

For organizations providing technologies, instruments, software, sensors, analytical systems, robotics or specialist technical expertise.

Data & Mapping Partner

For satellite operators, GIS organizations, remote-sensing companies, environmental-data providers and spatial-analysis platforms.

Field & Regional Partner

For organizations with operational knowledge, local networks, field access or direct experience in conflict-affected territories.

Mine Action & Land Release Partner

For organizations involved in humanitarian demining, UXO survey, clearance, geophysics and safe return of land or aquatic areas to civilian use.

Environmental Assessment & Recovery Partner

For organizations working with contaminated sites, soil, groundwater, sediments, water systems, remediation and post-conflict environmental recovery.

Laboratory & Monitoring Partner

For environmental laboratories, sensor providers and organizations capable of supporting sampling, analysis and long-term monitoring.

Research & Methodology Partner

For universities, research institutes, expert groups and organizations interested in methodological development and interdisciplinary investigation.

Project Development Partner

For organizations interested in transforming conference discussions into pilot studies, international consortia and larger follow-up projects.

Supporting Partner

For organizations wishing to support the conference financially, technically or in kind without necessarily participating in a specific project.

These categories are flexible.

A partner may belong to several of them.

Independence without artificial separation

Cooperation with companies and other organizations does not mean that conclusions can be purchased.

The credibility of the entire process depends on intellectual independence and transparency.

Financial or technical support does not determine conclusions, suppress inconvenient findings or guarantee endorsement of a technology.

At the same time, independence should not be confused with isolation.

We believe that serious investigation requires direct interaction between researchers, technology developers, field operators, affected regions and organizations responsible for eventual implementation.

Conflicts of interest should be disclosed.

Methods and limitations should be discussed openly.

Claims should be challenged.

Technologies should be evaluated according to what they actually contribute to the problem.

That is a stronger form of independence than keeping different professional communities artificially separated.

We understand the limits of current knowledge

One of the principles behind the conference is simple:

uncertainty is not an embarrassment to be hidden after the conclusions section.

In war-related environmental research, uncertainty may concern the original source of contamination, historical baselines, missing measurements, inaccessible territory, changing hydrology, population movement, mixture effects, attribution, exposure history or the reliability of existing data.

These gaps are themselves part of the problem.

The conference therefore welcomes organizations willing not only to demonstrate what they can do, but also to discuss **what cannot yet be measured, explained, reconstructed or solved.**

That is often where useful cooperation begins.

Why meet in Prague?

Many of the territories we discuss are difficult, dangerous or expensive to access.

Prague provides a neutral and easily accessible meeting point where specialists from different regions can work together before deciding what should happen in the field.

The conference takes place in central Prague, close to Charles Bridge.

The location is intentional.

Complex problems benefit from serious work, but serious work also benefits from an environment in which people can continue conversations outside formal sessions — over coffee, dinner, a walk through the city or an additional meeting after the programme ends.

We want cooperation to be professionally useful and personally easy enough to begin.

Start with a problem

If your organization works with technologies, data, field operations, environmental assessment, demining, laboratories, water systems, remediation, public health or recovery of conflict-affected territories, we would be interested in hearing from you.

You do not need to begin by selecting a sponsorship package.

Tell us instead:

What can you do?

What problem are you trying to solve?

What would you like to test or understand better?

Which regions are relevant to your work?

What kind of partners are you looking for?

And, equally importantly:

What do you not yet know?

That may be the most productive starting point for cooperation.

Contact the Organizers

We welcome proposals for participation, applied cooperation, technology contributions, field cases, datasets, pilot projects, project development, in-kind support and financial partnership.

Prague, 15–17 October 2026

War, Soil, and Freshwater Systems

From fragmented knowledge to practical understanding — and from understanding to recovery.

Dmitry Nikolaenko, PhD, Dr. Habil.

Co-Chair, Pollution and Diseases Conference 2026

Editor-in-Chief, Pollution and Diseases

<https://pdconference.org/>

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Have questions about participation, submissions, or cooperation?

P&D is not a meeting of people who already know the answers. It is a working meeting of people who possess different parts of the capability required to find them.

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