

Day 1 — What Do We Actually Know?

Thursday, 15 October 2026

Prague, Czech Republic

The first day establishes the common analytical ground for the conference.

Its purpose is not to provide a sequence of general introductions to war-related environmental pollution.

Most substantial materials can be read before participants arrive in Prague.

The purpose of Day 1 is different:

to establish what is actually known, where the evidence is weak, which assumptions require criticism, and which questions should shape the work of the following two days.

Day 1 therefore combines foundational materials, Critical Reviews, regional evidence, accepted contributions, information-system development and selected applied technologies.

09:00–09:30

Opening Working Session

Why are we meeting — and what should be different after three days?

The opening session introduces the working logic of the conference and the questions that will guide the programme.

Rather than asking participants to defend individual disciplinary positions, the conference begins with four practical questions:

What do we know?

How do we know it?

What do we still not know?

What should we do next?

The opening will also introduce the relationship between:

- the Specification;
- Critical Reviews;

- regional cases;
- Case Labs;
- Applied Systems & Technologies;
- and Project Studios.

Potential project directions identified during Day 1 will already be recorded for further development.

09:30–11:00

Foundational Working Session

Testing the Investigation Architecture

An important working object of the conference is the:

Specification for the Investigation of War-Related Environmental Contamination

The Specification will be published before the conference.

The Prague session is therefore **not a presentation of the document**.

Participants will already be able to examine it.

The purpose of the session is to test its structure.

Questions include:

- Does the Specification correctly represent the components of a real investigation?
- Which evidence categories are missing?
- Does the proposed structure work for different conflict histories?
- Which parts require spatial representation?
- How should uncertainty be recorded?
- How should field-access restrictions be incorporated?
- Can the structure be translated into sampling and analytical programmes?
- Does it provide enough information for remediation or engineering decisions?
- Which elements cannot realistically be implemented in particular regions?

The Specification will be treated as a **working instrument**:

apply → test → criticise → revise.

The Prague Framework and Volume I

The session will also examine the broader research architecture being developed within P&D.

This includes:

- the Prague Framework for studying war-related environmental contamination;
- Volume I;
- the relationship between individual studies and integrated investigations;
- causality and attribution;
- competing explanations;
- geographical and temporal structure;
- and the limits of existing evidence.

These materials are not presented as final answers.

Their purpose is to provide structures that can be tested against real problems.

Coffee Break

11:20–13:00

Critical Reviews

What Do We Know — and What Are We Only Assuming?

Instead of using conference time for a large number of separate overview presentations, several major problem areas will be examined through Critical Reviews.

Initial directions include:

War and Soil Systems

War and Freshwater & Aquatic Systems

War, Settlement & Land-Use Systems

Environmental Exposure & Human Health

The reviews are intended to distinguish between:

Established evidence

What appears to be supported reasonably well?

Probable but incomplete knowledge

What is plausible but insufficiently demonstrated?

Contradictory evidence

Where do studies or observations point in different directions?

Missing evidence

What has simply not been measured or documented?

Next questions

Which investigations would materially improve understanding?

Evidence Inputs

Accepted papers and other contributions may be incorporated into the Critical Review discussion as **Evidence Inputs**.

Their purpose is not necessarily to reproduce an entire paper orally.

A contributor may instead use a short input to identify:

- an important observation;
- a contradiction;
- an unusual case;
- a methodological problem;
- a missing variable;
- or a conclusion that deserves wider examination.

Full papers and abstracts remain available as part of the conference evidence base.

Lunch

14:00–15:15

Regional Reality Check

What Are We Failing to See?

International discussions of conflict-affected territories can become detached from conditions on the ground.

This session reverses that direction.

Participants connected directly with affected regions will be invited to identify what external researchers, companies and international organisations frequently fail to understand.

Current conference work includes contexts related to:

Ukraine

Vietnam

Sudan

and other conflict and post-conflict environments represented by conference participants.

Possible questions include:

- Which environmental problem receives too little attention?
- Which supposedly available data are actually unreliable?
- What historical information is missing?
- Which areas cannot be investigated safely?
- Which monitoring systems no longer function?
- Which local institutions or capabilities are usually overlooked?
- Which international assumptions are unrealistic?
- What problem needs attention now rather than another general study?

Regional inputs are intentionally concise.

The objective is to change the subsequent discussion, not to provide complete national reviews.

15:15–15:45

Coffee Break

The extended break is also intended for direct discussion between participants working on related problems, technologies or regions.

15:45–17:00

Design Review

From Publications to Information Systems

Complex environmental problems produce large numbers of documents but not necessarily an integrated understanding.

This working session examines an alternative approach.

Information System: Dolphins and TCDD-Related Contamination

An information system being developed around dolphin decline and possible wartime chemical legacies will be used as a working example.

The objective is to demonstrate how a problem changes when evidence is organised through relationships between:

- geography;
- time;
- contamination events;
- substances;
- biological observations;
- publications;
- hypotheses;
- competing explanations;
- and uncertainty.

The system is not presented as proof of one predetermined explanation.

It is intended to make the structure of evidence and missing evidence more visible.

War Pollution Information System

The session will then consider the developing architecture of a broader information system for war-related environmental contamination.

Possible components include:

- conflict events;
- affected territories;
- industrial and military sites;
- soil and water observations;
- remote sensing;
- field sampling;
- laboratory results;
- mine-action data;
- settlement and land-use change;
- human exposure;
- publications;
- and unresolved hypotheses.

This is a natural working area for cooperation between:

- local and regional organisations;
- GIS specialists;
- Earth Observation companies;
- environmental-data organisations;
- laboratories;
- researchers;
- and implementation partners.

The central question is:

How should complex evidence be organised so that it can actually support investigation and decisions?

17:00–18:00

Applied Systems I

Seeing the Territory

The final working block of Day 1 examines technologies that can change what becomes observable before or alongside field investigation.

Possible contributions include:

- optical Earth Observation;
- SAR;
- GIS;
- historical imagery;
- geospatial AI;
- drones;
- LiDAR;
- photogrammetry;
- and spatial change detection.

This is not a conventional company-presentation block.

Selected contributors will be asked to address a practical problem.

A short Applied Evidence Input should answer:

What can the method observe?

What evidence does it actually produce?

What cannot be concluded from it?

What requires field validation?

How could it be applied to one of the real territories discussed at the conference?

Several short inputs may be followed by a common discussion.

The purpose is to identify technologies and datasets that should enter the Case Labs and investigation-design work on Day 2.

End-of-Day Synthesis

Before the formal programme closes, the moderators will identify the most important outcomes of Day 1.

These may include:

- weaknesses identified in the Specification;
- major knowledge gaps;
- unresolved attribution problems;
- important regional constraints;
- missing datasets;
- potential technology applications;
- candidate Case Labs;
- possible pilot studies;
- and emerging project ideas.

These points will form part of the working material for Day 2 and Day 3.

What Day 1 Should Produce

Day 1 is successful if participants leave with **fewer false certainties and better-defined questions**.

The expected output is not consensus.

It is a clearer structure of:

what we know;

what we do not know;

why we do not know it;

and

what evidence or capability is required next.

That becomes the starting point for:

Day 2 — How Would We Actually Investigate It?

Programme Development

The detailed composition of Day 1 is still being developed.

Accepted papers, Critical Reviews, regional inputs, applied organisations and technology contributions will be assigned according to their **function within the working process**, rather than according to a predetermined hierarchy of plenary and parallel presentations.

Full papers and other substantial materials may be made available before the conference so that Prague meeting time can be used primarily for:

critical discussion, comparison, design and decision-making.

The programme follows the problem — not the other way around.

Evening Programme

Informal Dinner & Conversations by Charles Bridge

After the formal programme of Day 1, all participants are invited to continue the evening together in an informal setting.

A restaurant is located **in the same building as the conference venue**, on the second floor, with a balcony and a remarkable view over the Vltava River and Charles Bridge.

This is not an official conference session.

It is simply an opportunity to have dinner, relax and continue conversations that began during the day.

Complex cooperation rarely develops only during scheduled sessions. Sometimes the most useful discussion begins after the programme has ended — when there is more time to talk about an idea, a territory, a technology or a possible project without a microphone or a timetable.

Participation is entirely informal.

Those who prefer not to remain in the restaurant can instead take a walk through the surrounding historic centre of Prague.

The conference venue is located immediately beside Charles Bridge, within one of Europe's most remarkable historic urban areas. Prague Castle, Kampa, Malá Strana and the Old Town are all within walking distance.

There is no additional agenda for the evening.

Dinner, conversation, Prague — and perhaps the beginning of a project that did not exist that morning.