



The Business Case for Soil Health: Why Industry Cares Even When They Don't Have To

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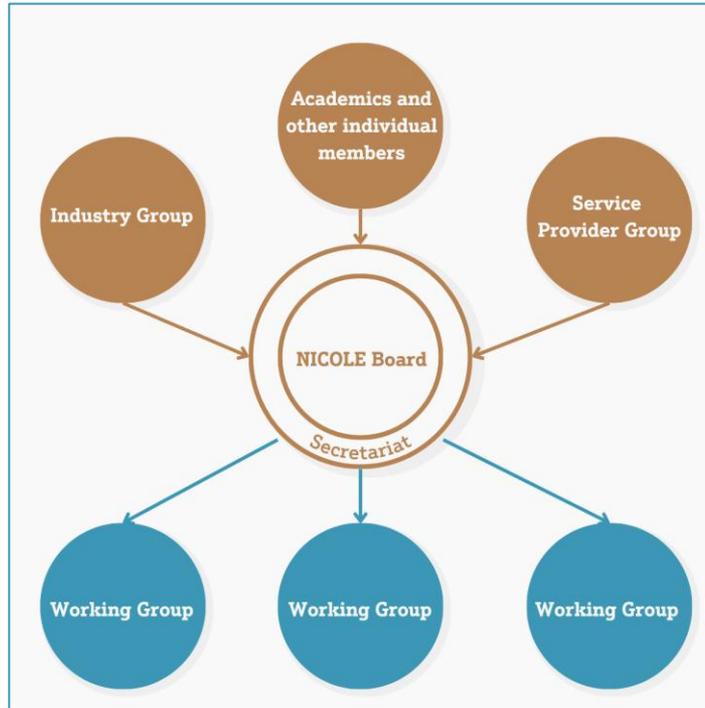
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What is NICOLE?



- NICOLE is a European Network that promotes knowledge exchange on all aspects of industrially contaminated land
- NICOLE represents industry, service providers and academia with about 150 members
- regular workshops and meetings take place on- and offline
- celebrating its 30th anniversary this year



Soil and groundwater pollution and protection – a brief history of Industry in Europe

Between 1860 and 1970ies strong increase of industrial production capacities in Europe

- lots of industrial developments
- strong need for rising living standards among population
- pioneering spirit in development of products and processes
- low-level 'till lack of environmental legacy caused strong emissions
- often soil filling with production residues
- 1st industrial wastewater treatment plants in the 1960ies cleaning one exposure path – but creating another waste stream without a proper waste disposal path, industrial sewage sludge – 1st incineration techniques in the 1900s
- in this era lots of soil and groundwater contaminations occurred



Soil Monitoring Law – from an environmental perspective for Industry in Europe

Potential soil pollution pathways are already strictly handled in Industry

- national emission legacies and IED already minimize possible emissions
- new emissions are not to be expected if Baseline reports, and monitoring reports are performed and provided
- restoration and remediation of soil and groundwater contamination affected sites is –not new – but furthermore welcomed attempt
 - This has to depend on the land use and – for (mega)sites – on existing official decisions and remediation-contracts
 - No “cleaning-for-the-sake-of-cleaning”
- a risk-based and sustainable management approach to the remediation of contaminated land is essential, considering the current and future known use of the sites

Potential soil pollution pathways are already strictly handled in Industry

- it is unclear to us to what extent the soil health criteria apply to industrial land. Due to the nature of an industrial site, it is often impossible to meet (all of) the soil health criteria
- no potentially contaminated sites should also be included on a public register – this can be of course a topic in neighborhood dialogues, but should not reduce the chances of renting and leasing
- missed opportunity regarding the re-use / circularity of excavated soil
- science and evidence-based approach provides a successful counterweight to an unbalanced use of the precautionary principle. The holistic combination of a proportionate approach within a risk-based, sustainable management context, including recent concepts such as Land Stewardship, is a key element to create certainty on how a new chemical or a newly identified exposure pathway may be dealt with



Soil Monitoring Law – from an economical perspective for Industry in Europe

How much will it cost?

- high economical burden for the member states expected
- economical burden for Industry rather uncertain, highly dependent on the actual implementation in the member states
- examples:
 - General handling of (potentially) contaminated sites (Chapter IV), additional effort depends on already existing national soil protection regulations
 - Trigger events (§15 (3) SML): Triggers may be not risk-based derived, e.g. mere change of land ownership. Costs for investigations and possibly follow-up measures



Soil Health– why industry should care

... because, if done right, it is in Industry's own interest!

- keeping healthy soils healthy – prevention is often better than remediation
- Industry's stakeholders care about Soil Health
- Industry is run by people – and people appreciate e.g. green spaces more than sealed surfaces
- Industry's supply chains rely on ecosystem services, which in turn profit from healthy soils



Role of relevant networks, like NICOLE

We'll be happy to support!

- the NICOLE community welcomes the opportunity to continue providing input where and when needed on the implementation of the Soil Monitoring Law
- strong community of Soil and Groundwater professionals from Industry, Service Providers and Academics

SUMMARY

- Healthy soils can strengthen ecosystems and supply chains, benefiting long-term industrial resilience
- The Soil Monitoring Law creates a unified EU framework for soil health and contaminated land management
- Industry raises concerns about certain mechanisms and definitions of the Soil Monitoring Law
- A proportionate, practical, risk-based implementation of the Soil Monitoring Law is essential to avoid unnecessary burdens while achieving environmental goals.