



What SPRINGS has been up to lately

Waterborne diarrhoeal diseases remain a major public health challenge, particularly for young children and other vulnerable populations. Climate change is adding another layer of complexity, altering the environmental conditions that influence how these diseases spread. Through research in Ghana, Tanzania, Romania and Italy, the Horizon Europe project SPRINGS is investigating these links and turning climate and health data into something health systems can use. Here's what has moved forward over the past six months.

Enjoy your read!

Feature story



SPRINGS consortium meets in Bucharest

In May, SPRINGS partners spent four days together in Bucharest for the project's third annual meeting, hosted by the University of Bucharest, right around the project's halfway mark. Beyond the usual progress reviews, the gathering included a student workshop using a climate-water-health game the project developed, a poster session where fifteen PhD and postdoc researchers presented their work, and a meeting with the university's biology department to find overlap between their research and SPRINGS' needs.

 [Read the article](#)

Project milestones and progress in the field

Turning global climate models into street-level forecasts

Global climate models are built for continents, not communities. Over the past months, the project finished translating those big-picture projections into local, usable numbers for two of its four case study countries, rainfall and temperature for Ghana, and rainfall for Tanzania (temperature data there remains hard to come by). Romania and Italy are next. Alongside this, the team built and published a tool that converts general climate statistics into realistic day-by-day sequences of rainfall and temperature, useful for anyone trying to model what a "typical" year might look like under a changing climate, not just this project.

👉 [The weather generator has been published in this discussion paper](#)

UPCOMING - A workshop bringing the consortium together to work through this data is planned in Cork later this year.

Understanding how infections move through communities

On the epidemiological side, the team has been working on a computer model that simulates how diarrhoeal pathogens spread through a population. Rather than only estimating the level of risk, the model examines how infections move between people, animals and contaminated water. It currently includes two of the project's four priority pathogens: *Campylobacter* and rotavirus, and considers factors such as vaccination coverage, population movement and healthcare-seeking behaviour. The model has now reached a stage where researchers can begin testing hypothetical intervention scenarios, allowing them to explore how different measures might influence disease transmission under changing conditions.



Access to WHO data opens new opportunities

After a long stretch of legal negotiation, the project secured access to WHO's Global Pediatric Diarrhoea Surveillance Network data. This is an important milestone as it means the project's disease projections can now be checked against real hospital and clinic data to validate disease burden projections developed within the SPRINGS project.

Strengthening water safety in Naples

In Italy, researchers are working directly with Naples' drinking water utility to build a water safety plan that accounts for climate risk, following WHO's guidance on the subject. In parallel, wastewater leaving the city's treatment plant is being tested regularly for two of the project's index pathogens, *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*, including whether the organisms found are still capable of causing infection. The team also presented this work at Naples' World Water Day event, alongside talks on microplastics and pharmaceutical pollution in water systems.



In Ghana, local voices are shaping the research

This spring, the project brought together water, sanitation and health stakeholders in Ghana for two online sessions to discuss and validate the interventions identified through SPRINGS' earlier mapping of climate adaptation and public health measures. The discussions helped identify which interventions are most relevant to the local context and highlighted the criteria stakeholders consider most important when assessing them. Building on these exchanges, the project is now launching a survey that will invite a wider group of stakeholders to rank the proposed

interventions. A similar process is planned for Romania later this year, helping ensure that future recommendations are informed by local priorities and realities rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.



👉 [Read more about the mapping adaptation interventions](#)

Planetary Health Cluster



Planetary Health Cluster takes centre stage at the European Parliament

The recording of the STOA workshop, Planetary Health: A Critical Discipline for the Future, is now available.

Hosted by the European Parliament's Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA), the event brought together experts to discuss how environmental change, planetary boundaries and human health are interconnected, and what this means for future European policies. During the workshop, Vanessa Harris from Amsterdam UMC and co-coordinator of the Planetary Health Cluster moderated the discussion, introduced the Cluster's work, and presented its first policy brief, which outlines recommendations for integrating planetary health into European and global policy agendas.

👉 [Watch the replay](#)

From definition to action: highlights from Cluster workshop on data and modelling approaches for Planetary Health



How can data and modelling better support Planetary Health? This question brought together researchers, modellers and policy experts from across the Planetary Health Cluster for a two-day thematic workshop in Heidelberg.

Participants worked towards a shared understanding of what Planetary Health models should achieve, explored opportunities to connect different modelling approaches, and discussed how models can better inform policy and decision-making. The workshop also highlighted the importance of transparency, stakeholder engagement and ensuring that modelling outputs are accessible and relevant for policymakers and other end-users.

The discussions marked an important step towards strengthening collaboration across the Cluster and developing shared approaches to using data and modelling to address complex environmental and public health challenges.

 [Read the full article](#)

New Policy Brief: Strengthening Planetary Health Literacy

The Planetary Health Cluster has published its first policy brief, highlighting the urgent need to strengthen planetary health literacy across Europe. The brief explains how environmental changes are directly affecting human health, while stressing that greater public understanding is essential to support effective policies and collective action.

It calls for clearer communication, stronger citizen engagement and policies that address the environmental drivers of ill health, helping societies stay within planetary boundaries. The recommendations build on the work of the Cluster's projects, including SPRINGS, which are developing evidence, tools and participatory approaches to support healthier and more resilient communities.

 [Read the policy brief](#)



PLANETARY
Health Cluster



Funded by
the European Union

Policies to enhance citizen understanding of planetary health and its impacts on health and wellbeing



Resources

Recap: the PoopLoop campaign

SPRINGS also ran an awareness campaign this year called PoopLoop, built around a simple idea: climate, water, and health feed into each other

in a loop that's hard to break once it starts. Heavier rains wash contamination into water supplies, droughts concentrate pathogens and push people toward unsafe alternatives, and the diarrheal disease that follows lands hardest on the most vulnerable. The campaign broke this down into a series of shareable posts covering everything from extreme weather to infrastructure and everyday water choices, all built to be reused or passed along.



👉 [Explore the full campaign and posts](#)

Also worth knowing about, from beyond the project

- A systematic review published this year looked at 39 studies on climate and childhood diarrheal disease across low- and middle-income countries — 87% found a significant link between climate variables and disease outcomes, which is a fairly strong outside confirmation of the problem SPRINGS is built around. [Read the review here](#)
- WHO also released a second edition of its Water Safety Plan manual this year, now building climate resilience and equity into the core guidance. [Check the manual here](#)
- Mozambique 2026: Severe flooding in Mozambique triggered a cascading public health crisis, damaging water and healthcare infrastructure and contributing to a sharp rise in cholera cases. The event illustrates how climate shocks can quickly overwhelm essential services and underscores the need to better connect

scientific evidence with policies that strengthen resilience before disasters strike. [Read more](#)

Stay connected, stay informed

