GEO Health Community of Practice (CoP)
Community Telecon
June 7, 2022

**In Attendance:** 14 participants
Juli Trtanj (NOAA), Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH), Kimberly McMahon (NOAA National Weather Service), Helen Amos (NASA Goddard), Assaf Anyamba (UMBC; NASA Goddard), Sushel Unninayar (NASA Goddard & KBR/Morgan State Univ.), Bob Chen (CIESIN/Columbia Climate School, Columbia Univ.; NASA SEDAC), Cascade Tuholske (CIESIN/Columbia Climate School, Columbia Univ.), Ashiraf Kyabainze (At Hause), Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland), Kamal Ramsingh (ZASPACE, South Africa), Niall Robertson (UK Health Security Agency), Mona Nasser (Univ. of Plymouth, UK), Mercy Borbor (Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral, Ecuador).

**Summary Notes:**  
*Prepared by Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)*

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** opened the telecon by welcoming all participants. She commented that this telecon aims to expand the open discussion on public-private partnerships, following up on the GEO Health CoP Annual Meeting in December 2021 ([Day 1 summary notes](#)). She asked CoP members to consider how they envision the role of the CoP in supporting public-private partnerships.

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** mentioned that the National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) [National Meeting](#) was held from April 26-28, 2022. Then, she also commented that NOAA and communities will be launching the urban heat island campaigns in 14 US cities and counties as well as two international cities ([NOAA and communities to map heat inequities in 14 U.S. cities and counties](#)). Next, she said that her team has been actively participating in a series of US congressional briefings on heat-health topics, which has increased visibility to this environmental health concern. Also, she stated that the Heat Small Work Group will hold their bimonthly telecon on Wednesday, June 8, 2022. Finally, she mentioned that the Belmont Forum Climate, Environment, and Health Round 2 will host a hybrid Africa Scoping workshop at the [Sustainability, Research, and Innovation Congress](#) in Pretoria, South Africa on June 24, 2022.

**Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)** shared the upcoming [ARSET trainings](#) in June and July 2022: 1) [Humanitarian Applications Using NASA Earth Observations](#) (June 14-23, 2022) and 2) [Monitoring Aquatic Vegetation with Remote Sensing (Monitoreo de la Vegetación Acuática con Teledetección)](#) (July 12-19, 2022). She also reminded CoP members that the NASA HAQAST Texas Meeting was held from June 1-2, 2022, and that the recordings will be available next week on the [event webpage](#).

**Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)** said introduced Alex Schmid ([LocationHealth, Switzerland](#)), who discussed current activities of the GeoHealth Swiss-based startup, [LocationHealth](#), that delivers spatial health-related information for real estate and travel as a one-stop map solution. He said that as these data are sparse, fragmented, and cumbersome to access, travelers and tenants who move houses can now access spatial environmental and health information for their activities. He said that LocationHealth was founded in 2020 and recorded between 400 and 800 daily searches within the first six months of live operation. He mentioned that next steps include: 1) integrating additional data sources; 2) extending service to other countries beyond Switzerland; 3) improving and implementing environmental and health indicators; 4) and expanding collaborations with data providers and institutions.
Bob Chen (CIESIN/Columbia Climate School, Columbia Univ.; NASA SEDAC) and Sushel Unninayar (NASA Goddard & KBR/Morgan State Univ.) asked about the overall strategy for expanding beyond Europe, recognizing that there may be challenges related to regional variation and data quality. Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland) said that their team plans to start with European countries (Germany, France), and that global expansion is not currently planned until addressing challenges with the appropriate data sources.

Assaf Anyamba (USRA/NASA Goddard) asked about the potential customers and if there is any competition in this space. Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland) said that they collaborate with the real estate marketplace (25%) and travel (75%). He commented that although there is no direct competition, different providers have separate information. For example, he said that the Swiss government offers open data, but data are difficult to aggregate.

Juli Trtanj (NOAA) asked about observing green spaces that denote healthy biodiversity as well as if they are using any remote observations (satellite or in situ) as health proxies. Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland) said that they would need better indicators to identify green spaces and environments with low concentrations of air pollution. He said that they are not using EO data, but that they would like to learn about how to integrate EO data into the application.

Niall Robertson (UK Health Security Agency) asked if this application is driving government policy (e.g. mitigation measures) in Switzerland. Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland) said that no policy changes have occurred yet, but that they have established government contacts who are interested in using these data for future projects.

Ashiraf Kyabainze (At Hause) asked if the application includes healthcare access for travelers in their location. Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland) said that the application only includes environmental data, and that data on health providers or healthcare access are not integrated yet. He said that these data would be interesting to incorporate in the application.

Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH) introduced Kamal Ramsingh (ZASPACE, South Africa), who shared ongoing work highlighting public-private partnerships as a mechanism to stimulate the development of small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises (SMME) in the EO and Space Tech. He mentioned that their challenge is to expand globally scalable SMME’s, leverage ecosystem strengths, and identify innovative partnerships. Recognizing potential barriers to collaborating with the technical sector, he commented that they can: 1) revisit the traditional definition of public-private partnerships; 2) build and provide shared infrastructure to support innovation and research funding at the state level; 3) promote research and creation of partnerships at the academic level; and 4) explore venture capital and private equity as well as industrialization and commercialization at the industry level. Also, he highlighted four upcoming projects: 1) building a pipeline (Pan-African EO / Space Tech Challenge); 2) supporting market access through industry bi-laterals and company profiling; 3) attracting investors such as space technology fund and space infrastructure hub; and 4) enabling the eco-system including partnerships with academia, information dissemination, and alignment with state entities.

Juli Trtanj (NOAA) asked if these public-private partnerships included both satellite and in situ data. Kamal Ramsingh (ZASPACE, South Africa) said that they are using EO data on the downstream, as they are looking to stimulate more companies building applications. He commented that their space agency plans to invest in building additional sources of satellite industry for applications. He also
stated that they are using very little ground-based data, and would like to build and strengthen partnerships for such collaborations (e.g. Digital Earth Africa, Digital Earth South Africa).

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** asked about shifting the paradigm on what public-private partnerships mean on a larger scale. **Kamal Ramsingh (ZASPACE, South Africa)** commented that they would like to extend the model and redefine public-private partnerships to not just include EO data but rather opportunities across different sectors. He said that research institutions have innovative solutions that will need to be scaled outside of the EO community.

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** and **Sushel Unninayar (NASA Goddard & KBR/Morgan State Univ.)** asked if health topics were included in the annual Space Tech Challenge. **Kamal Ramsingh (ZASPACE, South Africa)** said that the EO challenges are run to encourage solutions, and that health is not specifically included at this time. He commented that these challenges are not sector specific, but that they aim to attract a broader audience to develop solutions. He said that many challenges are in early phases, especially since travel was limited during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** said that they could connect their GEO contacts, since they coordinated the CoP Special Webinars with AmeriGEO in September 2021 and AfriGEO in March 2022. In particular, she said that they are interested in health and migration topics, but that they have been unable to answer related questions (e.g. how to track populations at risk after a natural or man-made event). She agreed that public-private partnerships could be beneficial to answer some of these questions with EO data. **Kamal Ramsingh (ZASPACE, South Africa)** said that they are preparing for GEO Week and Industry events and would be interested in looking at a vertical approach to health that can add momentum to the Pan African initiatives. **Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** agreed that they could develop use cases (e.g. human movement) as an example exercises for public-private partnerships and ultimately leverage the GEO network.

**Alex Schmid (LocationHealth, Switzerland)** commented that use cases can be helpful to focus on potential contributions within the network and extend their use to other applications.

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** said that the Heat Small Work Group may explore heat and migration as a public-private partnership as well as connect with AfriGEO and Esri for the GEO Week 2022 in Ghana. **Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)** mentioned that they can also connect with Steven Ramage (GEO Secretariat) for any further recommendations. **Cascade Tuholske (CIESIN/Columbia Climate School, Columbia Univ.)** said that the next Heat Small Work Group telecon aims to assess strategic goals and activities, including noting upcoming funding calls. **Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** commented that the CHIRTS map can offer a core framework to produce global information.

**Mercy Borbor (Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral, Ecuador)** mentioned that the Climate and Health Responder Course for Latin America (April-May 2022) aimed to engage the public health research and academic communities and facilitate participation in climate and health research that informs health and policy decisions. She said that this course was available in English and Spanish languages and offered a cross-cutting disciplinary perspective on climate and health topics. She expressed that there are several challenges in the Global South, including strengthening modeling efforts and developing interventions on climate and health topics. **Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** said that these
challenges exist in Africa and Asia and wondered if a CoP Small Work Group on capacity building (vs capacity building activities per Small Work Group) should be considered.

**Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)** mentioned that they may be able to connect ongoing CoP activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. *The Earth Observations Toolkit for Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements, EO4SDG Earth Observations in Service of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*). **Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** agreed that connecting the CoP with the GEO EO4SDG will be one upcoming priority of the EO4Health work plan.

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA)** thanked CoP members for their continued contributions to the field and engagement in the group discussion. They agreed that these teleconferences provide an opportunity to share information, connect researchers, and leverage resources that can amplify current activities using Earth observations for public health applications.

**Juli Trtanj (NOAA) and Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)** closed the teleconference and mentioned that the next community teleconference will be scheduled for Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 11:00AM EDT (GMT-4). This telecon will offer a debrief on the National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) *National Meeting* and ongoing work of the Heat Small Work Group.

Adjourned: 10:00AM EDT (GMT-4)