



The Download Jul 2017

Message from the Chief Scientist

It has been a busy and productive 2017 for the Tropical Data team so far. We have been working with lots of new countries and partners, as well as continuing efforts with those who are implementing surveys on a rolling basis or are undertaking multiple rounds of surveys. To date, we have supported 425 surveys in 26 different countries, of which 298 have had data fully processed, while the remainder are still in progress in the field or undergoing data cleaning and approval. We also have over 150 surveys in the final planning stages or waiting to begin!

**250
COMPLETED
SURVEYS**

The 250th district surveyed in June 2017 was the combination of two districts in the Ha Giang province of Vietnam, Dong Van and Meo Vac. Congratulations to the partners – VNIO (Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology), RTI, FHF and ITI on completing another fantastic milestone!

In this edition, you will find more detail on the training opportunities Tropical Data offers. We also showcase work currently taking place in Zambia where the Ministry, with support from partners, is undertaking all four trachoma survey types at once.

This is an incredible piece of work, which, as you can imagine, also has some challenges.

In addition, we would like to share a note on planning, based on the experience of some recent surveys. Please be aware that an important first step when planning for surveys is to establish the field protocol, even before attempting to finalise budgets. This ensures that the protocol and budgets align, avoiding a situation in which you have to repeatedly revise the budget as the protocol is refined, or, even worse, suddenly find yourself short of funds mid-survey. To help with this, the team at Tropical Data is always on hand to provide technical support drafting survey protocols. We are happy to work with you as far in advance as needed. Please get in touch with us through our website - application.tropicaldata.org.

Finally, we love receiving pictures and case studies from the field, so do please continue to send these to us using the details at the end of the newsletter. It is important to share the fantastic progress being made on the road to global trachoma elimination - your pictures might even make the next newsletter!

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Tropical Data Super Training

In May 2017 we held our second anglophone Tropical Data Super Training in Arusha, Tanzania. 47 participants from 15 nationalities came together to train as graders and recorders. We would like to wish a very big well done to all those who attended and thank you to those who supported, including the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children in Tanzania for hosting us once again. We are now looking forward to the

francophone training, which is due to take place from 17 to 21, July 2017 in Mbour, Senegal. Countries have been nominating participants and planning is well underway. It looks like it is going to be even bigger than before with over 60 participants. We look forward to seeing many of you there and want to thank the Ministry of Health in Senegal in advance for their support, as well as the organising team at RTI.



WHAT'S NEW?

Zambia has just become 2017 Tropical Data 'super-users', carrying out every type of survey Tropical Data currently offers - baseline, impact, surveillance and TT only. Fourteen teams were deployed to undertake the work in sixteen districts between May and July of 2017.



Zambia case study

Sightsavers Zambia are supporting the Ministry and acting as coordinating partner; coordinating the work of three other NGOs (Orbis, OEU and Lions Aid Norway), as well as carrying out work in their own districts of focus. Glenda Mulenga, the Country Director at Sightsavers, says that recent acceleration in the government trachoma programme to one of national elimination has led to closer collaboration between partners supporting the Ministry, some of whom had not worked together previously. Using the Tropical Data platform has helped bring them together as they work collectively to standardise the mapping process.

Along with helping to improve collaboration across partners - a common request from Ministries of Health - Tropical Data has brought additional benefits. Using mobile phones has made data processing much faster, allowing the team to catch errors early on and the GPS capture adds a new level of oversight. Finally, online data management is making planning for interventions much simpler and aiding the country as it implements the full "SAFE" strategy alongside scaling up promotive and preventive health services.

One tip from the Zambia team is about being flexible with your timetables and budget as you plan field activities - even the best-laid plans can be difficult to maintain when working in remote environments.



GETTING STARTED

Don't let a lack of survey funding stop you – get in touch if this is an issue and we can offer advice on finding funds. It is also never too early to start planning and we encourage any programme with upcoming surveys to register at application.tropicaldata.org to make us aware of the survey requirements. We are always happy to discuss these and answer any questions you have. For more information on the service or to get in touch, please visit our website www.tropicaldata.org or email admin@tropicaldata.org.



TROPICAL DATA

Tropical Data helps countries to collect high quality data by providing epidemiological, training, logistical and data management support to national programmes carrying out all types of cross-sectional surveys on trachoma. More info at: www.tropicaldata.org