



The Download Dec 2017

As the end of 2017 approaches, Tropical Data is pleased to announce that we have now supported over **500 surveys globally**, which involved your teams examining over **1.5 million people in 28 different countries** and the **processing of 50 million data items**.

With this newsletter we celebrate these milestones and offer an in-depth look at how the service supports data collection in particular.

In November, we welcomed Dr Emma Harding-Esch (Emma.Harding-Esch@lshtm.ac.uk) to the Tropical Data team. Emma has a PhD in trachoma from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, with field experience in Gambia, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania, and is fluent in both English and French. We are delighted to have her join us, and are sure that you'll help us to make her feel welcome.

Thank you for all your hard work, encouragement, partnership and feedback this year. We wish you all the best for the New Year, and look forward to continuing to work with you in 2018.

It's all about data...

The aim of Tropical Data is to help countries collect robust prevalence data in a standardized way, in order to support trachoma elimination. High quality data are key for any national programme. Below, we describe in more detail some of our work flows when it comes to data processing, just one part of the TD service. We also want to reiterate one of our most important tenets: all data collected using TD tools are owned by the respective health ministries. Our service is simply a suite of linked tools to facilitate the generation and use of high quality data.

As data are collected by field teams, they are sent from Android smartphones to secure servers, where standardized data management is undertaken. (For maximum data security, servers are located all over the world.) Ministry staff are encouraged to fully engage in the data cleaning process by reviewing the raw datasets, which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week via www.tropicaldata.org. (Note that we can now also support a dual API link to national data servers, if requested. If this is of interest, please tell us as early in the planning phase as possible.)

While data are being collected, the TD Data Team (based at ITI) regularly reviews your incoming data and sends updates and cleaning recommendations via email.

Ministries must approve any data amendments before they are implemented and all changes made to data are recorded in the Cleaning Log on the website. Designated health ministry personnel are responsible for approving data at two stages, which are outlined in the user roles to the right. Approvals can be done through our secure data management website, or via email. Once data are cleaned and approved, users have access to a variety of summary reports on the website.

For more information on our data management process and approvals, please also take a look at the resources page on our website.

www.tropicaldata.knowledgeowl.com/help



Data Management Roles

Health ministries are responsible for nominating individuals from within government or partner organizations for various user roles on the website, which include:

- **User Manager:** Can assign roles to other individuals. By default, when the project is created, this role is assigned to the National Program Coordinator or equivalent. This individual is then encouraged to add/edit other user roles via the website.
- **Approval C*:** Approves sampling summaries (households and residents by EU and by cluster); demographic summary by cluster; WASH summaries and data cleaning.
- **Approval P*:** Approves the TF and trichiasis prevalence estimates, based on standardized analyses of the Approval C-cleared data.
- **Data Downloader:** Can download raw data in real time, full cleaned datasets for Approval C-cleared EUs, and reports of TF and trichiasis prevalence and WASH indicators.
- **Data Viewer:** Able to track the movement of EUs through the various approval stages and see the Approval P summaries once EUs are fully approved.

*Note: It is possible for one person to be designated to undertake both Approval C and Approval P, if desired.

Tropical Data's 500th Survey

The TD Team is happy to report that the 500th survey that we have supported recently took place in Luabo district, Mozambique in partnership with the Ministry of Health and supported by RTI International. We spoke with Dr Abdala Mariamo, the Coordinator of the National Trachoma Programme, to find out more about the programme's recent efforts. Dr Mariamo, a TD-certified Master Grader Trainer, described the way in which multiple ministries in Mozambique have worked closely with partners, towards trachoma elimination goals since the country's first surveys in 2012. The programme now uses TD to support all trachoma surveys, and is extremely happy about the efficiencies that have come with leaving paper behind.

As in many countries, Mozambique teams have overcome poor access to remote communities and the consequent difficulties in maintaining lines of communication and supervision. Also, insufficient human resources can sometimes translate to difficulty in forming teams and keeping them motivated. The ministry tackles these challenges by working closely with all of their partners, including endemic communities, to find solutions. The team noted that being part of the TD network provides opportunities to share experiences and learn from others. Mozambique looks forward to continuing this process as they move towards elimination.



IN OTHER NEWS



Training of Trainers 2018

Planning is already underway to finalize our calendar of workshops for 2018. We are likely to have four - francophone and anglophone workshops in Africa; one in the Pacific Islands and another in South America. Do keep this in mind if you have surveys due and need to boost capacity.

TD Expansion

Following feedback from countries, the team are working hard on plans to expand our service to include other NTDs. We hope to have more news on this in early 2018.

Top tips for planning surveys

- It's never too early to start planning. If you have upcoming surveys please register at application.tropicaldata.org
- If materials are required to be shipped or you need support from international trainers, we ask you to give us 6 weeks' lead time.
- Do try and finalize protocols with us *before* finalizing your budget, to ensure the two align and you have sufficient funds. We are happy to support the drafting of protocols well in advance of when surveys are due.
- If funding is an issue, do [get in touch](#). We are happy to give advice, wherever possible, on sourcing funds.



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 or email admin@tropicaldata.org