



In partnership with
Canada



Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas

A partnership between the Pan American Health Organization and the Government of Canada

The Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas, led by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and funded by the Government of Canada, was launched in 2023. With implementation scheduled to continue through 2028 and a contribution of 15 million Canadian dollars, the initiative has accelerated the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem in the Region and brought comprehensive health care to vulnerable populations, especially in rural and remote communities across the 12 participating countries.

In line with PAHO's policy for the elimination of communicable diseases and related conditions by 2030, the initiative has succeeded in placing trachoma on national public health agendas, while also serving as a platform for addressing other health priorities. This integrated approach has strengthened health systems, expanded access to essential services, and promoted sustainable interventions that address the social and environmental determinants of health.

Trachoma, the leading infectious cause of preventable blindness worldwide, continues to disproportionately affect women and children in settings with limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene. In response, PAHO supports the ministries of health in countries participating in the initiative in monitoring this disease and, when necessary, in implementing interventions in line with the SAFE strategy recommended by the World Health Organization for the prevention, control, and elimination of trachoma. In addition, PAHO promotes integration with other public health actions and gender and intercultural approaches.

The epidemiological situation varies among participating countries. Mexico eliminated the disease as a public health problem in 2017, followed by El Salvador in July 2026. Guatemala and Paraguay are the countries closest to validating the elimination of the disease, which remains a public health problem in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. Other countries, such as Bolivia and Venezuela, have communities that may require interventions. Meanwhile, the disease is suspected to be present in Ecuador, Guyana, and Panama. It is important to implement surveillance measures in these countries to confirm whether or not the condition is a public health problem.

Progress toward the elimination of trachoma in the Americas

In recent years, the Region of the Americas has made significant progress toward eliminating trachoma as a public health problem, through national leadership, community engagement, the strengthening of health systems, and collaboration among national and international partners.

Among the main achievements are the validation of trachoma elimination in El Salvador and the progress made by Guatemala and Paraguay in preparing their dossiers for validation. Mexico has not only maintained elimination of the disease but has also pioneered the implementation of a post-validation surveillance survey, positioning the country as a global leader in conducting this type of study and strengthening the evidence of its achievements. Likewise, Brazil's progress is noteworthy; after decades of interventions for the prevention, control, and elimination of this disease, the country is moving toward the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem.

As a result of sustained and coordinated efforts among the ministries of health, PAHO, and various strategic partners, the initiative has helped build national surveillance capacities in the participating countries, thereby facilitating evidence-based decision-making. This process has fostered innovation, built technical capacities, and generated key knowledge to guide more effective public health decision-making.

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) component has also been strengthened by promoting data generation, the



development of tools such as monitoring dashboards, and the implementation of solutions adapted to local contexts. This approach has fostered intersectoral coordination and the identification of appropriate technologies at the community level, helping to improve living conditions and prevent disease transmission.

Equity, gender, and intercultural considerations have been mainstreamed throughout, recognizing that the sustainable elimination of trachoma requires culturally appropriate interventions, the participation of Indigenous communities, and an explicit focus on historically excluded populations.

In addition, progress has been made in mapping key stakeholders, strengthening strategic partnerships, and promoting advocacy efforts to keep trachoma as a priority on health agendas.

The Region of the Americas is moving toward the elimination of trachoma through a comprehensive, equitable, and sustainable approach, reaffirming its commitment to leaving no one behind and to improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable populations.

IN FIGURES:

12 countries

at different epidemiological stages are participating in the initiative.

2 countries

have eliminated trachoma as a public health problem: Mexico (2017) and El Salvador (2026)

5 years

of implementation (2023–2028) with funding from the Government of Canada



During the third year of implementation,

more than 8700 people

in at least 113 Indigenous, rural, remote, and hard-to-reach communities received health care

More than 3900 people

completed an online course entitled "Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health: Working together"



For more information, scan the QR code or follow this link:

<https://www.paho.org/en/initiative-elimination-trachoma-americas>

