

ECUADOR

Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas

*A platform to bring
comprehensive health care
to the most vulnerable
communities*

Ecuador participates in the Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas

Ecuador participates in regional efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem. As part of the Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas, nearly 1800 people in Taisha and Shushufindi – cantons in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Sucumbíos in the Ecuadorian Amazon – have been assessed to determine whether the disease is a public health problem. Most of the populations involved are remote and difficult to access; in some cases, the only means of access is by air.

Ocular trachoma is the leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide. In the Americas, 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, 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 disease is a public health problem.

A partnership between the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Government of Canada aims not only to eliminate trachoma but also, through the integration of activities, to strengthen primary healthcare services in the most vulnerable communities, build the capacity of Ministry of Health workers in the 12 participating countries, and demonstrate the value of international cooperation in achieving more resilient health systems and a better future for all.

The initiative is aligned with PAHO's efforts to eliminate more than 30 diseases and related conditions by 2030, through an integrated and sustainable approach that promotes collaboration across sectors and within health systems.

What are Ecuador's main advances toward the elimination of trachoma?

Between 2024 and 2025, rapid trachoma assessments (RTAs) were conducted in the cantons of Taisha, in the province of Morona Santiago, and Shushufindi, in Sucumbíos, during which nearly 1800 people were assessed. The target populations were selected because they face conditions of vulnerability, such as limited access to safe water, low health service coverage, and high levels of illiteracy.

The results of the RTAs, along with those of a serological surveillance survey conducted in the province of Esmeraldas, were reviewed by trachoma experts from Tropical Data, PAHO, and the World Health Organization (WHO), who recommended conducting population-based epidemiological surveys to obtain solid evidence to confirm the presence or absence of trachoma and determine its magnitude as a public health problem.

Ecuador has achieved the following:

- **Territorial approach:** Intervention in two priority geographic areas in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Sucumbíos.
- **Strengthening of the surveillance team:** Local teams were trained to carry out epidemiological surveillance activities in accordance with global quality standards, following the Tropical Data methodology recommended by PAHO/WHO.
- **Comprehensive health care:** The opportunity to engage with the communities was used to provide care for other diseases and conditions of public health interest.
- **Intercultural approach:** Development of an online course to train health workers on the Knowledge Dialogues Methodology and adaptation of Ecuador's family, community, and intercultural health model to the Achuar and Shuar Indigenous Peoples of the Taisha canton.
- **Strengthening of health teams in the integration of WASH interventions:** Around 1100 people completed an online course entitled "Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health: Working together".



Scan the QR code to learn more.
[PAHO Ecuador advances the regional strategy and local plan of action to eliminate trachoma.](#)

For more information, see:
<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/trachoma>

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What key actions will Ecuador take to accelerate trachoma elimination?

Within the framework of sustained cooperation between the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador and PAHO, and as part of the Initiative for the elimination of trachoma in the Americas, funded by the Government of Canada, Ecuador has taken on the challenge of implementing the following actions:

- **Surveillance measures:** Conducting "trachoma plus" surveys in the provinces of Las Esmeraldas, Morona Santiago, and Sucumbíos to determine whether trachoma constitutes a public health problem.
- **Intercultural approach:** Implementation of the Knowledge Dialogues Methodology with a gender and intercultural focus to promote health and prevent trachoma.
- **Progress toward the regional and global goal:** Strengthen the actions needed to move toward the validation of the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem in Colombia.

