

PARAGUAY

Initiative for the Elimination of Trachoma in the Americas

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



Paraguay contributes to the elimination of trachoma in the Americas

Paraguay is making progress toward validation of the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem. In 2018, the country conducted rapid trachoma assessments (RTAs) in priority areas of the Paraguayan Chaco characterized by social vulnerability and limited access to water and health services – factors that can facilitate transmission of the disease. In 2019, this information was supplemented by serology results from dried blood spot samples collected as part of integrated serological surveillance in the Paraguayan Chaco.

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, 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 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 Paraguay's main advances toward the elimination of trachoma?

In 2018, Paraguay implemented RTAs in the departments of Presidente Hayes, Boquerón, and Alto Paraguay. In addition to the RTAs, in 2019, the evidence base was strengthened through serological analysis of dried blood spots from the Paraguayan Chaco.

In 2025, Paraguay joined the Initiative for the elimination of trachoma in the Americas. This collaboration has helped build national capacities and provide financial support to advance the validation process through the compilation of the elimination dossier, positioning the country as a candidate for validation of trachoma elimination.

What key actions will Paraguay take to accelerate trachoma elimination?

Paraguay will implement strategic actions aimed at accelerating validation of the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem. To that end, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSPBS), with support from the Government of Canada and technical cooperation from PAHO/WHO, will conduct a comprehensive review of the evidence compiled in the elimination dossier. This process will help identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement, as well as produce concrete technical recommendations to guide decision-making and strengthen the national validation process.

Surveillance visits will also be conducted in areas where rapid assessments (RTAs) have previously been carried out, specifically in the Indigenous communities of Campo Loro, Jotoicha, Ebetogue, and Quenkuket in the Paraguayan Chaco. These actions are being carried out in coordination with the Eye Health Program Directorate of the MSPBS.

In addition, in coordination with the National Directorate of Indigenous Peoples' Health of the MSPBS, the Knowledge Dialogues Methodology is being implemented

to recognize cultural practices, address waste management, and discuss other priority health issues, such as vaccination and the empowerment of Indigenous women. This intervention is being carried out in the Indigenous communities of Campo Loro, Jotoicha, and Ebetogue in the Paraguayan Chaco.

These actions will help build local capacities, verify the sustainability of interventions in the post-elimination phase, and gather relevant community evidence to support the national process of validating elimination.



For more information, scan the QR code or follow this link:
<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/trachoma>

Photographs: © PAHO/Mirtha Rodriguez

