

# SOP 5: Organizing Surveys

## 1. Introduction

This document is designed to assist you in organizing surveys using the ESPEN Collect platform. It serves as a comprehensive guide that highlights best practices to ensure standardized and high-quality survey experiences. Drawing from the experiences of numerous countries that have utilized ESPEN Collect between 2018 and 2024, this SOP provides valuable insights and practical advice.

The guide covers essential aspects of survey organization, including survey design, logistics, data collection, fieldwork descriptions, data management, and quality assurance. By following the guidelines outlined in this document, you will be able to conduct efficient and effective surveys, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the collected data.

## 2. Survey Design and preparation

The process of organising a survey using ESPEN Collect begins with a request to use the platform from ESPEN Portal. This process is detailed in “SOP 2: Procedure for Requesting Access to the Platform”. Once access has been granted, the next steps involve reviewing the survey protocol and preparing the necessary ethical clearance for WHO/AFRO. This review ensures that the survey complies with all WHO recommendations for the specific type of survey supported by ESPEN Collect.

Once the protocol has been reviewed and ethical clearance has been granted, the preparation of the electronic form begins. This form is based on a standard questionnaire available on the ESPEN portal in the ESPEN Collect documents section (<https://espen.afro.who.int/tools-resources/espen-collect/registration-summary>). The preparation is done by an ESPEN Collect data manager.

The standard questionnaire is customized to meet the specific needs of the survey. For example, customisation may include inserting the list of administrative divisions where the survey will be conducted (e.g. region, district, location). Due to the need to support multiple surveys and their interdependencies, modifications to the standard form are generally not accepted, except for changes related to administrative divisions and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) questionnaires for SCH/STH (Schistosomiasis/Soil Transmitted Helminths) surveys.

There are three types of form for mapping and impact assessment surveys:

1. **Site Form:** This form collects information relating to the survey site, such as the name of the site, GPS coordinates and the consent of the site manager.
2. **Participant/Enrolment Form:** This form collects information relating to the participants, such as age, gender, etc. Participants' names are not collected; instead, a unique identifier is used. The name associated with the unique identifier must be recorded in a register and kept by the Ministry of Health (MOH). This register enables the MOH to identify the information stored in the ESPEN Collect database.
3. **Diagnostic Results Form:** This form stores information on diagnostic results. For CHS/STH surveys, there are two diagnostic results forms: one for Kato-Katz results and one for urinary results.

Detailed instructions on how to install and use the electronic form can be found in “SOP 3: ESPEN Collect Step-by-Step Guide”. In addition, the presentation “ESPEN Collect Training for Data Collectors” provides more details on the forms.

### 3. Data collection

Data collection involves gathering accurate and reliable information in the field using standardized methods and tools. Before starting data collection, it is essential to conduct training for the data collection teams. “SOP 4: Training Manual for Instructors” provides detailed information on how the training is organized.

To achieve optimal results, we recommend organizing the data collection teams as follows. Each team should consist of at least three people: two laboratory technicians and one data entry operator. The laboratory technicians are responsible for collecting samples and conducting examinations, while the data entry operator records the laboratory results in ESPEN Collect. This model is a reference for optimal results but can be adapted based on field realities. The final decision rests with the survey organizers, who are familiar with the local context.

Data collection begins with a visit to the village chief or school principal. The team leader will conduct a briefing on the survey process at the school or village. Ideally, the village chief or principal should be informed in advance to facilitate preparatory work and coordination. During this briefing, it is advisable to ask the questions from the site form related to the school or village, such as the total population of the village. At the end of the survey, it is important to take the GPS coordinates outside the buildings.

The next form to be filled out is the participant form. Before filling out this form, the laboratory technicians should use paper copies to record participant information (sex, age) and assign unique IDs that will be used for diagnostics. They should then collect the samples, conduct the examinations, and record the results on the forms. The participant form and the diagnostic result form will be filled out using the paper copies. Having both a paper copy and an electronic copy will be very useful during data cleaning. Data collection is a meticulous task, with an average error rate of 2% by data entry operators during data entry. Using paper copies as a pair-working method reduces the error rate. The diagnostic result form will also be filled out using the paper copies. The following diagram provides more details.

## 4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in conducting surveys to ensure the protection and respect of participants' rights and well-being. This section outlines the key ethical principles and practices that must be adhered to during the survey process.

### 4.1 Informed Consent

Obtaining informed consent from participants is a fundamental ethical requirement. Participants must be fully informed about the purpose of the survey, the procedures involved, the potential risks and benefits, and their rights, including the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without any consequences. The informed consent process should include:

- Providing participants with a clear and concise information sheet.
- Ensuring that participants understand the information provided.
- Obtaining written or verbal consent before any data collection begins.

### 4.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

Maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of participants is crucial. All personal information collected during the survey must be kept confidential and securely stored. Measures to ensure confidentiality and privacy include:

- Using unique identifiers instead of personal names to protect participants' identities.
- Limiting access to the data to authorized personnel only.
- Ensuring that any published results do not contain identifiable information.

### 4.3 Ethical Approval

Before commencing the survey, it is essential to obtain ethical approval from the relevant ethics committee or institutional review board. Additionally, ethical approval must be obtained from WHO/AFRO. The ethical approval process involves:

- Submitting a detailed survey protocol outlining the objectives, methodology, and ethical considerations.
- Providing information on how informed consent will be obtained and how confidentiality will be maintained.
- Addressing any potential risks to participants and how these will be mitigated.

Addressing any potential risks to participants and how these will be mitigated.

### 4.4 Respect for Participants

Respecting the dignity, rights, and autonomy of participants is a core ethical principle. This includes:

- Treating all participants with respect and courtesy.
- Ensuring that participation is voluntary and free from coercion.
- Providing participants with the option to ask questions and receive answers throughout the survey process.

## 5. Conclusion

By following the guidelines outlined in this SOP, you will be well-equipped to organize and conduct surveys using the ESPEN Collect platform. This document has provided comprehensive instructions on survey design, logistics, data collection, fieldwork, data management, and ethical considerations. Adhering to these best practices will ensure that your surveys are conducted efficiently and effectively, yielding accurate and reliable data.

Next, we will explore “SOP 6: Guide to Metabase, Monitoring, and Supervising Results”, which will provide detailed guidance on using Metabase for data visualization, monitoring survey progress, and supervising the quality of the collected data. This next SOP will help you leverage data insights to enhance the overall impact and success of your surveys.