

**Survey Report on the TVSEP household  
and village head survey  
in Vietnam and Thailand**

**2022**



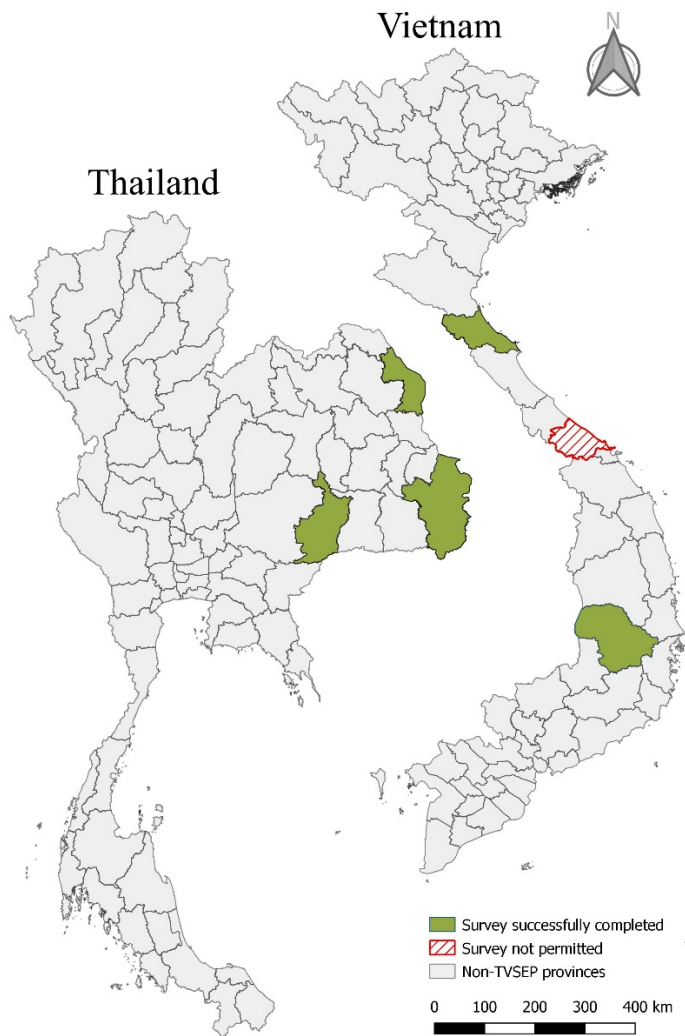
## **1. Background**

Starting in early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the plans to conduct the 9<sup>th</sup> wave of the TVSEP household- and village head survey in Thailand as well as delayed the administrative process to obtain permission to continue survey work in Vietnam. Apart from the remotely organized TVSEP Covid-19 Special Survey, no data collection activities were feasible before restrictions would lift and an end to the pandemic became a perspective. As Thailand lessened travel and quarantine restrictions in the fall of 2021, preparations for the 2022 household- and village head survey began. Since by the time the survey was to be conducted, households had not been visited in over a year and the Covid-19 Special Survey showed outdated village head contact information, a team from the TVSEP Headquarter in Hannover, Germany set out to visit each of the 220 villages, talk to the village head about future survey activities and distribute some small gifts. This yielded a contact and location database that would prove to be very useful during the main survey and considerably reduced the organizational pressure in the field.

A first field test of the newly adjusted questionnaire had been carried out days before the first lockdowns in March of 2020. Experiences from this were used during the time of the pandemic to adjust the questionnaire by adding new modules about recently relevant topics and deleting some modules in exchange. During the design and testing of the questionnaire, special attention was paid to the applicability of the questionnaire to both Thailand and Vietnam to be prepared for a revival of survey activities in Vietnam during the course of 2022.

In Thailand, following an in-depth pre-test and preparation during February and March of 2022, the household and village head survey were carried out between May and June of 2022.

In Vietnam restrictions lifted much later and as the survey in Thailand already finished, efforts were still ongoing to obtain permission. In the fall of 2022, permission was granted for the province of Ha Tinh and later for the province of Dak Lak. Data collection was subsequently conducted in September to December of 2022, while still retaining the usual reference periods of May 2021 to April 2022. No permission could be obtained for the province of Hue. The resulting survey provinces for 2022 are illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Map of survey areas. Shape source: Humanitarian Data Exchange (2023).**

## **2. Objectives and conduct of surveys**

In its data collection activities for 2022, TVSEP followed three main objectives:

First, to further advance and develop digital questionnaires, that yield high quality data already in the field and minimize the need for data cleaning after the survey. This was done e.g. by posting warnings and errors to enumerators and implementing automated checking procedures. Additionally, data quality was ensured by Data Checking Assistants, who monitored each incoming questionnaire and requested correction from the enumerators in case of issues.

Second, to achieve low attrition, despite Covid-19 and a five-year survey gap in Vietnam. This was facilitated by an in-depth pre-planning, including the acquisition of updated contact data as well as pre-survey arrangements with local authorities and village heads.

In Thailand, routing, and the location of the accommodation of the teams was optimized in order to further increasing efficiency in data collection.

Third, to advance the content of the questionnaires while still retain the core elements of the survey instrument of previous waves, but allow for the introduction of new and relevant questions and sections. Further, the contents of the Covid-19 Special Survey were converted into a module of the household questionnaire, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the effects of the pandemic on a household level as well as seamless integration with the Covid-19 Special Survey. Additionally, the usual system of being able to match information on household and member level was retained and in this way consistency improved.

In summary, all three objectives could be achieved. Although more questions were asked per interview than in previous waves, the interview time remained at a similar average of 138 minutes per interview in Thailand and 168 minutes in Vietnam. A more detailed development of interview times throughout the surveys is illustrated in Figure 2 and 3, clearly showing the increase in experience and efficiency by the enumerators. In Vietnam, most interviewers are very experienced, resulting in a faster efficiency gain, although overall interviews were longer due to a slightly extended questionnaire. Further, due to a restructured questionnaire, respondents were better able to follow the topics within the questionnaire, minimizing the necessity to jump back and forth.

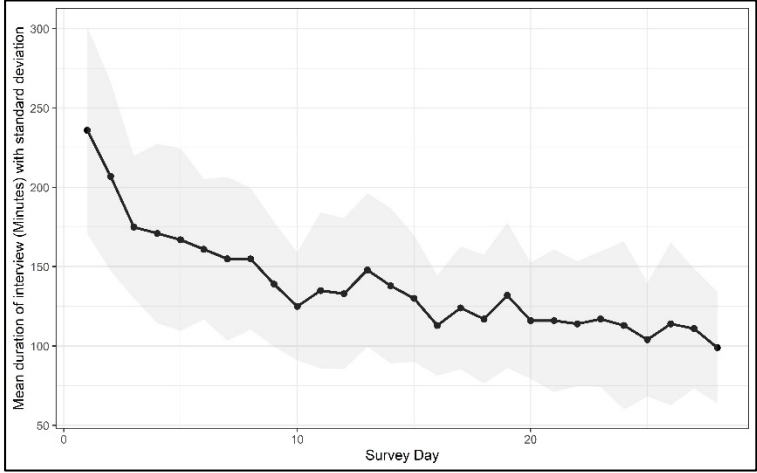
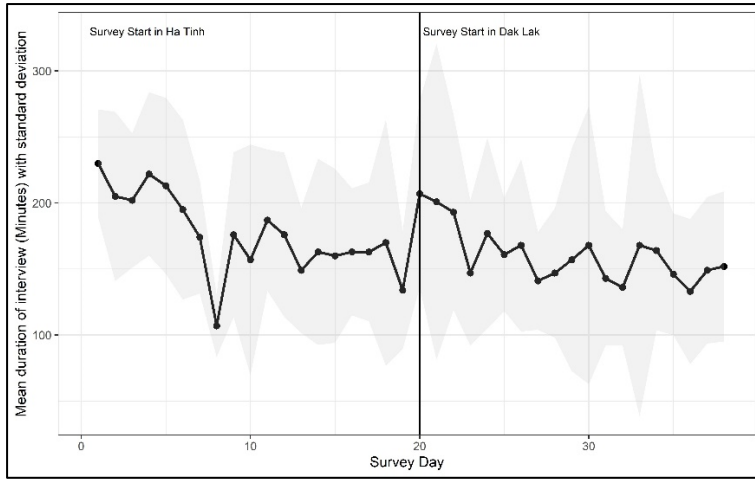


Figure 2. Mean interview time per survey day in Thailand (all three provinces)



**Figure 3. Mean interview time per survey day in Vietnam**

Considering the five-year survey gap in Vietnam, attrition remained low, as shown in Table 1. This was crucial, as no resampling and replenishment of the panel was conducted, unlike in it had been carried out in Thailand in 2019. Thailand exhibited relatively low attrition as well, with about 4.5% of households leaving the panel. In Thailand an attempt was made to contact households again that had chosen not to participate in the Covid-19 Special Survey, which proved to be successful in 35 cases, more than half of those not participating in the Covid-19 special survey.

**Table 1. Panel attrition by survey province**

Country	Province	Attrition (%)	Reference Year
Thailand	Buriram	3.8	2019
	Ubon Ratchathani	4.6	2019
	Nakhon Phanom	5.5	2019
Vietnam	Ha Tinh	5.8	2017
	Dak Lak	3.5	2017

Overall, the surveys were conducted without major problem, despite the constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Survey management strictly implemented precautionary measures such as providing masks, alcohol gel and Covid-19 test kits to the interviewer teams, as well as emphasizing hygiene and social distancing during the training. All interviews were conducted outside the respondents' houses.

### **3. Structure of the questionnaires**

#### **3.1 Household Questionnaire**

The TVSEP Household Questionnaire follows the usual structure of previous waves, however multiple new sections were introduced, while other sections have been discarded/shortened or restructured and moved as documented hereafter. Changes aimed to improve the conduct of the interview in the field are not listed. One major improvement was that questions on location (e.g. “Where did [MEMBER] go?”) received a modified and more precise code list, in all sections, allowing for a more precise location description.

The following new sections were included:

##### **1. Covid-19**

The contents of the Covid-19 special survey were included in the household questionnaire in their entirety. Most questions are moved to section 11 at the end of the questionnaire, questions pertaining to household members are included in the member section as sections 2.7 (Covid issues of [MEMBER]) and 2.8 (Impact of Covid-19 on the education of [MEMBER]). Questions on Covid-19 related public transfers are included in section 7.2 (Public Transfers, other payments and Insurance).

##### **2. Plastic and waste**

In the rural areas, plastic and waste often pose an environmental as well as a health hazard. Some locations do not have ways to collect trash, necessitating other harmful ways of disposal. This section seeks to explore the quantity and use of plastic and waste generated by the households.

##### **3. Health (partly)**

The health section was extended with information on vaccinations, additional impairments, smoking and drinking habits, etc.

##### **4. Expectations on inflation and future expenditures**

This section contains questions on the expectation of the households on how prices of purchased goods have developed in the past 12 months and how they may develop in the coming 12 months.

## **5. Locus of control**

This section was included analogous to the German Socio Economic Panel's (SOEP) questionnaire to include questions on subjective assessments by the respondents of their locus of control and patience.

## **6. System of Rice Intensification (SRI)**

To assess the prevalence of this training programs in the households of the panel, a section on "System of Rice Intensification (SRI)" was included.

## **7. Organic production**

With rising demand, adoption of organic agriculture may be of importance, hence this short section about the status quo and future plans.

The following sections were discarded:

### **1. Natural resource extraction**

Due to the high amount of effort to ask this section and its low relevance for household income as well as the inconsistent and in some cases duplicated information with other sections, especially when the extraction is conducted commercially, this section was dropped.

### **2. Aspirations**

This section proved time consuming and hard to grasp conceptually for the respondents and was thus excluded.

### **3. Character traits (in Thailand) and satisfaction, risk attitude and psychological impacts of Covid-19 (in Vietnam)**

Due to the proneness of this section to misunderstandings by the enumerator as well as the respondent, the related training effort and the necessary time during the interview, this section was dropped in Thailand. Since no household survey was conducted in Vietnam since 2017, this section was retained and "11.9 Satisfaction, Risk Attitude and Psychological Impacts of Covid-19" was discarded instead as no baseline Covid-19 Survey was conducted in Vietnam.

#### **4. Subjective assessment of wellbeing**

Due to the length and difficulties in comprehension by the respondents, this section was dropped.

The following sections were moved within the questionnaire:

##### **1. Off-Farm Employment**

Since Off-Farm Employment is asked on a member-level, it was integrated into the Member Roster into the “Occupation” Sub-Section, now allowing for a recording of the employments when they are first asked for.

##### **2. Expenditures (partly)**

Questions about expenditures pertaining to other sections were moved there. Especially in the member section, this greatly improved accuracy, e.g. for education and health expenditures now being asked on a member level.

##### **3. Insurances (partly)**

Before, respondents encountered issues distinguishing between insurances that applied to one person only (e.g. life insurance) and household wide insurances. The updated version of this section asks for member specific insurances in the member section and for household wide insurances in section 7.

The following sections were restructured:

##### **1. Household Dynamics**

Due to the frequency of transfers related to occasions such as funerals and weddings, transfers sent and received for specific occasions are now recorded as totals with the number of occasions as a second questions. Transfers from and to individuals are asked for individually, including information about the persons.

##### **2. Assets, Investment, Disinvestment**

In previous waves, these sections frequently led to a degree of frustration with the enumerators and respondents. The new version integrates all related questions into one module as well as reducing the code list of items that are being asked for. Related questions on land are now asked for in the land section, specific to the plot, allowing for more details.



### **3. Household Wealth**

This section now contains questions on satisfaction as well, while some questions have been discarded.

### **4. Livestock**

To allow for a better interview flow, the previously separated subsections on livestock and livestock products have been merged. More detailed questions on butchered animals have been added to better assess this income stream.

### **5. Borrowing**

Due to frequent confusion by interviewers and respondents, the sections on borrowing, delayed/failed payments and credit rationing were merged into one section with improved structure.

## **3.2 Village Head Questionnaire**

The village head questionnaire (only applied in Thailand) was extensively modified as compared to previous versions. The goal was to include more information on the socio-economic conditions in the village, analogue to the household questionnaire as well as future plans for development, also including new technologies. In accordance with the village head survey during the Covid-19 special survey, key questions were retained.

#### 4. Selected descriptive statistics

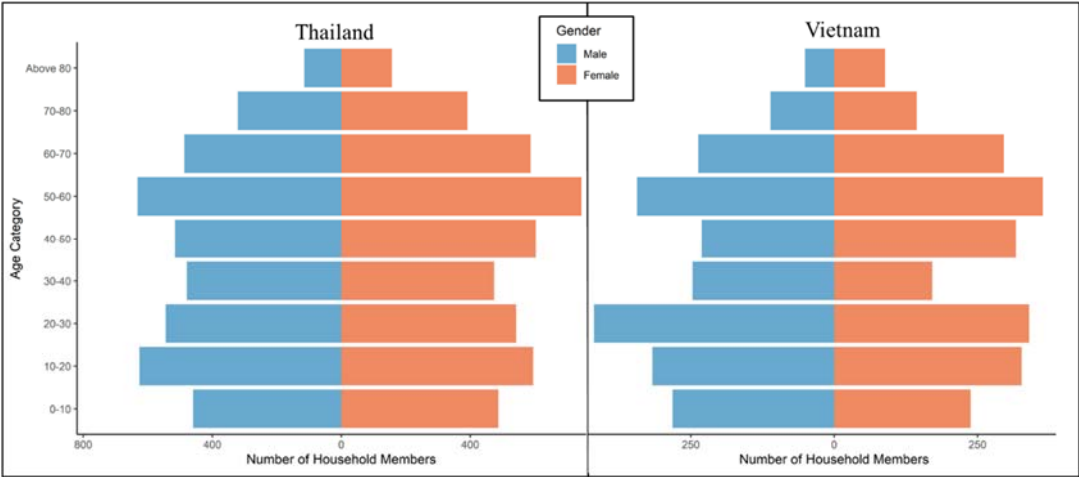
This chapter aims to provide some descriptive statistics, that allow for an insight into the socio-economic structure in the panel as well as into the challenges, that households face, e.g. through natural disasters.

Table 2 displays the respondent characteristics by province and gender. As can be seen, the respondents are mostly in their late fifties or early sixties and predominantly female.

**Table 2. Respondent characteristics by province**

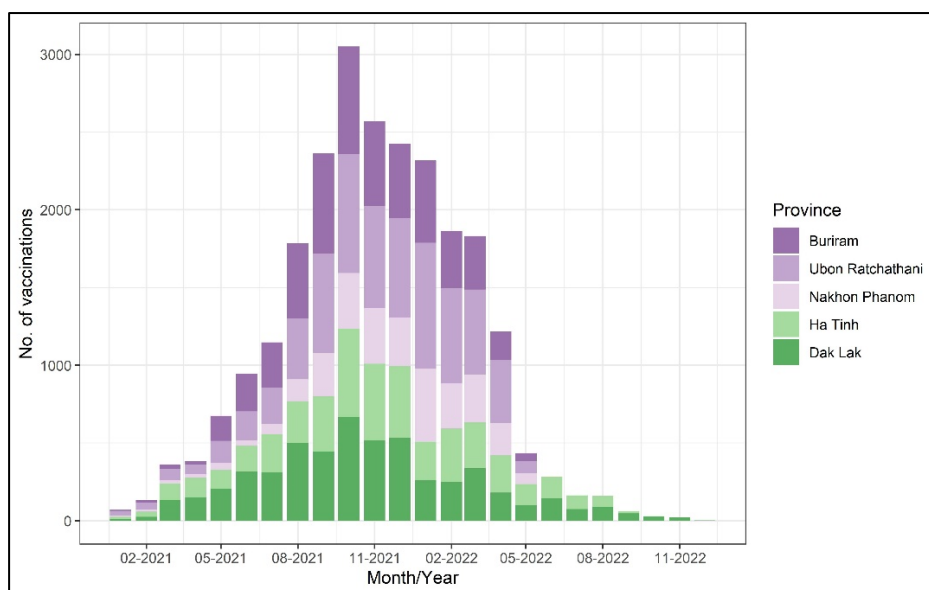
Country	Province	Male (n)	Mean age (male)	Female (n)	Mean age (female)	Diverse (n)	Mean age (diverse)
Thailand	Buriram	219	64	570	58	-	
	Ubon Ratchathani	324	62	609	57	1	24
	Nakhon Phanom	89	64	289	58	-	
Vietnam	Ha Tinh	231	62	373	58	-	
	Dak Lak	316	54	307	52	-	

Figure 4 shows the demographic composition of the members of panel households by means of an age pyramid. Thereby, Thailand exhibits a population that is more present in the older and younger age categories. While Vietnam shows a similar pattern, there is a clear emphasis on the younger population.



**Figure 4. Population pyramids of panel household member, 2022, Thailand and Vietnam**

Covid-19 had far-reaching and global impacts. Vaccinations were an important measure to prevent infections and serious sickness. The number of vaccinations by month in TVSEP provinces is shown in Figure 5. In both countries vaccinations campaigns only reached full effect in the fall of 2021 with a steady decline since then. In Thailand, by the end of the survey (May 2022), 88.7% of household members had been vaccinated at least once and in Vietnam (November 2022) 91.5% in Vietnam.



**Figure 5. Covid-19 vaccinations by province, Thailand and Vietnam, 2021 - 2022**

Aside from the impact of Covid-19 on health, households faced economic consequences as well. Table 3 shows the effect of the pandemic on the financial situation of the households during the respective reference periods. About half of the households in both countries indicated a negative or very negative effect of the pandemic on their financial situation. This rather moderate impact may indicate the effectiveness of Government support measures or it could be the lack of willingness to talk about this period of hardship with lock-down and restrictions. On the other hand, since most households are located in rural areas Covid- 19 restrictions were less of a problem for them.

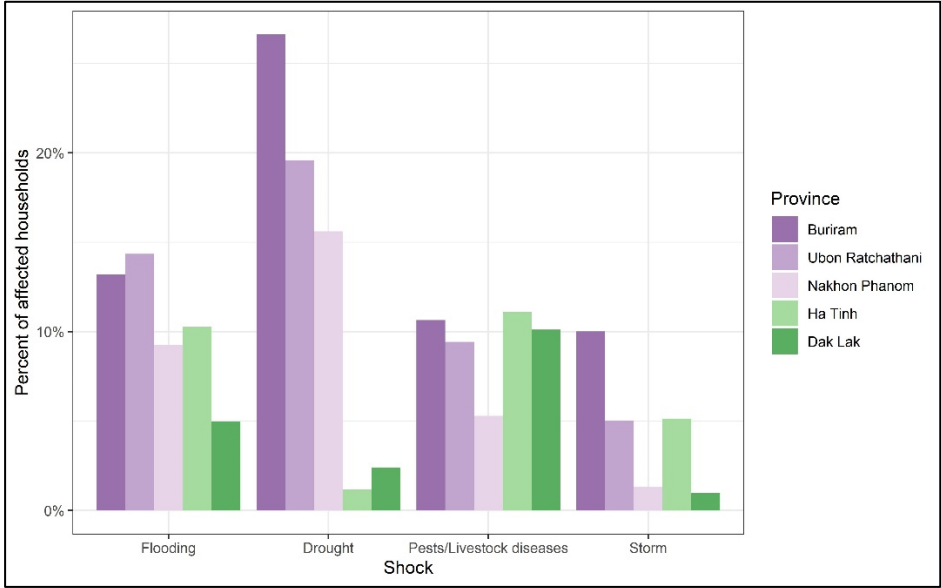
**Table 3. Impact of Covid-19 on the financial situation of the households in the panel**

Impact	Thailand (n)	Thailand (%)	Vietnam (n)	Vietnam (%)
Very negative impact	223	11	29	2
Negative impact	912	43	584	48
No impact	962	46	608	50
Positive impact	4	0.19	6	0.49
Very positive impact	0	0	0	0

Note: Reference period in Thailand: 11/20 – 04/22, Reference period in Vietnam: 03/20 – 04/22

In addition to Covid-19, households are facing a multitude of other shocks, with the frequency of natural disasters increasing in recent years also in connection with climate change. Figure 6 shows the frequency of such shocks by province as a frequency of households that reported the event at least once. As can be seen, the province of Buriram is particularly at risk of drought, while the province of Ubon Ratchathani is slightly more vulnerable to flooding. Although the data from Vietnam refers to a longer reference period of 2017 – 2022 in comparison to 2019 –

2022 in Thailand, overall incidence of shocks remains low, mostly below 10% of interviewed households.



**Figure 6 Percent of affected households by type of shock, by province, both countries**

The household questionnaire of the 2022 surveys incorporated a module on plastic and waste for the first time. This module is of interest in relation to the rising environmental issues. Table 4 shows, that on average, households in Thailand produce more trash and burn trash more frequently. In both countries, about 20% of households chose to throw their trash on vacant land.

**Table 4. Disposal methods and mean per day trash per household**

Country	Province	Mean trash per day per HH (kg)	Percent of HH that burn trash	Percent of HH that throw trash
Thailand	Buriram	1.04	53.1	19.9
	Ubon Ratchathani	1.23	41.5	19.6
	Nakhon Phanom	1.1	21.7	17.7
Vietnam	Ha Tinh	0.81	32.7	21.9
	Dak Lak	0.79	39.6	22

**5. Description of dataset and relevant information for data users**

**Format**

The dataset is provided in “.dta” format as this can be used by most software, such as STATA or R. Further, a PDF version of the questionnaires is provided. The folders follow the sections of the questionnaires and are labelled accordingly. Three important points should be considered by the data user.

First, the questionnaire relies on a nested structure, e.g. allowing for one household to have several members, each with several employments. Each of these levels is provided in a separate file and is linked by “ID” variables to the higher levels.

Second, the intra-interview identifiers as assigned by the software are retained. To match households across waves, the variable “QID”, provided in the main file in “Section 1”, should be used and merged to the required section if needed. To match individual members, several IDs are provided in the member section and can be utilized analogous to and in conjunction with the “QID”.

Third, questions of the type “Multi-Select” are extensively used in the questionnaire, greatly improving the precision by allowing respondents to indicate multiple answers. These questions are converted to binary variables in the data. An exemplary question with related codes: v10001 - Which options do you have? 1- Option 1, 2 – Option 2 and 3 – Option 3 would appear in the dataset as binary variables v10001\_1, v10001\_2 and v10001\_3 with each one containing information if the option, as indicated by the last digit, was selected. In questions that additionally record the answer order, a non-selection is indicated by “0”, while the selected options receive ascending numbers in the succession of selection.

## **Cleaning**

Aside from basic compilation and processing of the data, no further data cleaning was undertaken. Due to the self-enabling structure of the questionnaire, only relevant questions are displayed to the enumerator, making “missing” answers unlikely. Regarding outliers, the data are checked three times during data collection (on the tablet upon entry, by Data Checking Assistants and again on the headquarter level), with exceptional values being validated with the respondents. Therefore, a traditional cleaning would likely flag numerous values, that are recorded as indicated by the respondents, just based on distributional considerations. The decision on how to process these should be made in accordance with the research topic.

## **6. Conclusion**

In Thailand, TVSEP successfully concluded the surveys planned during the second project phase despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Hence, detailed data before, during and after the pandemic could be obtained, allowing scholars to perform in-depth research on up-to-date and relevant topics. In Vietnam, the 2019 survey had to be discarded due to undisclosed interventions by the government authorities. However, it was possible to resume the panel in 2022 in two of three Vietnamese provinces.

TVSEP extends its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the many people who worked tirelessly to successfully complete the 2022 survey wave.

## **References**

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