

PORTUGAL

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE DATA SHEET 2024

Health and climate change in Portugal

The *Lancet* Countdown on Health and Climate Change annually takes stock of the evolving links between health and climate change through 50+ peer-reviewed indicators. Since 2016, these indicators have provided regular, reliable global and regional stocktakes on climate change and health. Data in this year's report reveal that people all around the world are facing record-breaking threats to their wellbeing, health and survival from the rapidly changing climate. This document summarises key country-level findings from the 2024 report of the *Lancet* Countdown* and the 2024 Europe report of the *Lancet* Countdown** for Portugal, which reveal that:



Trends in **heat and health** are particularly concerning, with populations experiencing increases in exposure to high temperatures, undermining livelihoods and threatening people's health and wellbeing.



The persistent net **subsidising of fossil fuels** of billions of dollars restricts funds available for health-supportive services, and hampers a transition towards clean, zero-emission energy.



Unhealthy, unsustainable diets are contributing to GHG emissions and undermining health and wellbeing, with deaths attributable to dietary risks that could be reduced through balanced, low-emission diets.

These findings underline the urgency of redirecting finance away from health-harming fossil fuels; and towards strengthening local health systems, adapting to climate change, and pursuing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through interventions that simultaneously deliver health co-benefits.

Heat and health

Exposure to high temperatures threatens people's lives, health, and wellbeing, leading to death and heat-related disease, and increasing healthcare demand during heatwave episodes. Older people, socio-economically deprived communities, very young children, pregnant people, and those with underlying health problems are particularly at risk.



From 2014-2023, the total number of heatwave days experienced annually by adults over age 65 was 53% greater than the equivalent demographic from 1986-2005 (indicator 1.1.1)



In 2013-2022, Portugal's overall mean increase in heat-related deaths was estimated to be 12 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, rising from approximately 122 deaths in 2003-12 to 134 in 2013-22 (indicator 1.1.4).**

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HEAT

Heat exposure limits labour productivity, which undermines livelihoods and the social determinants of health.

21 million potential labor hours were lost due to heat exposure in 2023 (indicator 1.1.3).

US\$130 million was the potential income loss from labour capacity reduction due to heat in 2023 (indicator 4.1.3).



Construction workers were the most affected, losing 40.3% of potential hours (indicator 1.1.3) and 45% of potential income (indicator 4.1.3) in 2023, followed by agricultural workers with 38.7% of hours lost (indicator 1.1.3).



Lisbon and Porto have both had very low or low levels of greenness since at least 2015 (indicator 2.2.3), underscoring the need for urban greening to boost heat resilience and protect health.



CHANGE IN HEAT-RELATED MORTALITY RATE IN PORTUGAL EXPRESSED AS THE NUMBER OF DEATHS PER 100,000 INHABITANTS BETWEEN 2003-12 AND 2013-22.**

Diet and health

Promoting shifts to healthier, more plant-based diets can substantially reduce agricultural GHG emissions, while also delivering major co-benefits for public health through improvements to dietary risk factors and reduced deaths due to unbalanced diets.



In 2021, red meat and dairy consumption in Portugal generated 0.51 tCO₂e per person, accounting for 66% of consumption-related agricultural emissions. Their production emitted 0.78 tCO₂e per person, making up over 70% of agriculture production-related emissions (indicator 3.3.1).



28%

In 2021, nearly 7,000 deaths were attributable to overconsumption of dairy, red meat, and processed meat, which accounted for 28% of all diet-related deaths that year (indicator 3.3.2).

Sea level rise

Climate change is exacerbating food insecurity and undernutrition by reducing crop yields, labour capacity, and access to water and sanitation; disrupting supply chains; and compromising marine resources through higher coastal sea surface temperatures, reduced oxygenation, ocean acidification, and coral reef bleaching.



In 2023, over 75,000 people were living less than 1 m above sea level in Portugal (indicator 2.3.3).

Air pollution, energy transition and health co-benefits

Use of fossil fuels and biomass leads to high levels of air pollution, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, diabetes, neurological disorders, and adverse pregnancy outcomes, and ultimately, contributing to a high disease burden and mortality.



Over the past several decades, Portugal's use of coal in its energy systems has dropped substantially, making up only 2% of electricity and 1% of total energy in 2021 (indicator 3.1).



13% of Portugal's total energy supply and 56% of its electricity came from modern renewables in 2021 (indicator 3.1).



However, biomass continues to be used in households. Despite nearly half of all household energy sourced from electricity in 2021, 28% still came from burning biomass (indicator 3.1.2).



94%

Furthermore, despite a decrease in use in recent years, fossil fuels still account for 94% of road travel in Portugal (indicator 3.1.3).

Transitioning energy systems to renewables, and eliminating dependence on biomass for household energy and fossil fuels for road transport, would benefit human health, simultaneously reducing air pollution, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and contributing towards universal, affordable, and clean energy.



\$2bn

In 2022, Portugal had a net negative carbon price, indicating that fossil fuel subsidies were greater than carbon revenue. This was equivalent to over \$US 2 billion in net subsidies to fossil fuels in 2022 alone (indicator 4.3.3).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LANCETCOUNTDOWN.ORG

* Romanello M, Walawender M, Hsu SC et al. The 2024 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: Facing record-breaking threats from delayed action. Lancet 2024; published online October 2024.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)01822-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)01822-1)

** van Daalen KR, Tonne C, Semenza JC et al. The 2024 Europe report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: Unprecedented warming demands unprecedented action. The Lancet Public Health.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(24\)00055-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(24)00055-0)

@lancetcountdown | www.lancetcountdown.org | info@lancetcountdown.org