

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE DATA SHEET 2025

Health and climate change in Trinidad and Tobago

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change tracks the evolving relationship between climate and health through 50+ peer-reviewed indicators. Since 2016, it has provided peer-reviewed annual assessments, published in *The Lancet*. The 2025 report reveals the grave health toll of climate change inaction: fossil fuel dependence, rising emissions, and delayed adaptation are costing millions of lives. Recent climate policy rollbacks further threaten our ability to respond to the accelerating crisis, undermining progress towards a healthy future.

This document highlights key country-level findings from the 2025 Lancet Countdown report for Trinidad and Tobago, showing that:



In Trinidad and Tobago, populations are increasingly exposed to extreme heat, contributing to rising cases of heat-related illness and mortality, and undermining livelihoods and wellbeing.



The already high burden of chronic non-communicable diseases in the country will be worsened by more frequent flooding and other weather extremes.



Communities in Trinidad and Tobago face growing health risks from sea-level rise, including direct impacts such as injury and waterborne disease, and indirect effects like displacement and loss of access to essential services.

With the threats of climate change growing, protecting people's health and survival demands simultaneous and unprecedented efforts to advance adaptation and mitigation, and requires an "all hands on deck" approach.

Heat and Health

Exposure to high temperatures threatens lives and health, increasing the risk of heat-related illness and mortality. Vulnerable groups, including older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing conditions, face the greatest risks. In Trinidad and Tobago heatwave exposure has risen above global averages, placing growing pressure on health systems.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HEAT

Heat stress significantly reduces labour productivity undermining livelihoods and weakening the social determinants of health. In Trinidad and Tobago, where many depend on climate-sensitive work like agriculture, and construction, this translates into reduced income, compromised food security, and limited access to healthcare, deepening existing inequalities and placing added pressure on public systems.

77.7

In 2024, people in Trinidad and Tobago were exposed to 77.7 heatwave days each, on average. Of these, 74.1 (95%) would not have been expected to occur without climate change. (Indicator 1.1.1)



Rising temperatures also threaten the health benefits associated with outdoor physical activity. In 2024, individuals experienced over 1000 more hours per person during which ambient heat would have posed a moderate or higher risk of heat stress if undertaking light outdoor physical activity (e.g., walking), relative to the 1990–1999 baseline average. (Indicator 1.1.2)



In 2024, heat exposure resulted in the loss of over 100 million potential labour hours, 126% higher than the 1990–1999 annual average. While workers in the construction sector were the hardest hit (62% of 2024 losses), losses in the service sector have increased the most, over 3.5 times as many hours lost in 2024 compared to the 1990–1999 annual (Indicator 1.1.3)



The potential income lost from labour capacity reduction due to extreme heat was US\$600 million in 2024. Workers in the construction sectors were severely affected, incurring 63% of the losses in 2024, and the service sector incurred 21% of the losses. (Indicator 4.1.3)

Vulnerability to Infectious Disease

Trinidad and Tobago continues to experience recurrent dengue outbreaks, with outbreaks primarily driven by the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. These vectors thrive and reproduce more rapidly in warmer temperatures, making climate change a key amplifier of disease risk and a pressing concern for public health planning and resilience.



Between 1951-1960 and 2014-2023, the climate suitability for the transmission of dengue by *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes increased 14.4%. (Indicator 1.3.1)



Though the amount of time that the climate conditions in Trinidad and Tobago are suitable for the spread of malaria have decreased 7% since the 1950s, an average of 3.7 months per year were still suitable for spread in 2015-2024. (Indicator 1.3.2)

CLIMATE SUITABILITY FOR DENGUE

Rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns are accelerating the spread and seasonality of dengue, enabling mosquito vectors to thrive in new regions and for longer periods, posing growing challenges for disease surveillance, prevention, and control.

Sea level Rise

Sea level rise poses risks through flooding, erosion, water contamination, and disease spread. Populations living less than one metre above sea level in Trinidad and Tobago are particularly vulnerable. Without adequate adaptation, relocation may be necessary, with health outcomes depending on the support provided to migrant and immobile populations.

5,000 PERSONS were living within 1 metre of the Trinidad and Tobagonian coastline in 2024. (Indicator 2.3.3)



The sea surface temperature in coastal areas of Trinidad and Tobago were 1.29 C higher in 2022-2024 compared to 1981-2010, which can intensify tropical storms, disrupt marine ecosystems, and accelerate coral bleaching, all of which pose risks to coastal health and livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago. (Indicator 1.4)

Energy transition and health co-benefits

Trinidad and Tobago is one of the few oil-producing SIDS, with oil and gas exportation accounting for 40% of the nation's GDP. Many households in Trinidad and Tobago still rely on polluting fossil fuels, which pose health risks and limit energy reliability. Redirecting fossil fuel subsidies toward clean, affordable energy could improve health and strengthen energy security.



In 2022, 56% of household energy in Trinidad and Tobago came from electricity; however, 22% came from natural gas and 19% came from liquid fossil fuels. (Indicator 3.1.2)



Trinidad and Tobago provided a net subsidy to fossil fuels, indicating that fossil fuel subsidies were higher than carbon prices. The country's net subsidy was equivalent to US\$346 million in 2023 alone. (Indicator 4.2.4) Redirecting fossil fuel subsidies toward clean energy could reduce pollution, improve air quality, and strengthen health systems by ensuring more reliable power for essential services.

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