LANCET COUNTDOWN: TRACKING PROGRESS ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
In collaboration with Wellcome

A decade tracking progress on health and climate change

EL SALVADOR

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DATA SHEET 2026

Health and Climate Change in El Salvador

T The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change tracks the connections between health and climate change. In its tenth iteration, the 2026 Global Report shows that the health impacts of climate change have escalated, and frequently accelerated, in the decade since the Paris Agreement came into force. The Lancet Countdown Latin America tracks these links across the region, and its 2026 report provides the latest assessment of progress and challenges on health and climate change across Latin America.

This document draws on findings from both the **2026 Lancet Countdown Global Report (indicators represented in bold)** and the forthcoming 2026 Lancet Countdown Latin America Report to present key insights for El Salvador.

Increasing heat exposure is affecting vulnerable populations and workers in El Salvador, with consequences for health, physical activity, labour capacity and livelihoods.

Changing environmental conditions are increasing the suitability for dengue and Vibrio transmission.

Household air pollution continues to harm health in El Salvador, highlighting the importance of increasing access to clean household energy.

Heat and Health

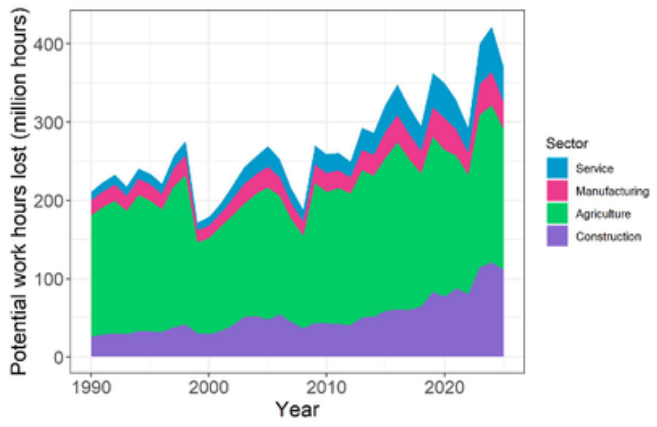
Exposure to high temperatures increases the risk of heat-related illness and mortality. Vulnerable groups, including older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing conditions, face the greatest risks.

Children under one year of age and adults over 65 in El Salvador each experienced approximately 1.6 additional heatwave days annually between 2016 and 2025 compared with 2006–2015, reaching an average of around 2.5 heatwave days per year for both groups. **(Indicator 1.1.1)**

The average annual monetised value of heat-related mortality among people aged over 65 in El Salvador was US$270 million between 2021 and 2025, equivalent to over 15,660 average annual incomes. This was a 533% increase compared with 2000–2004. **(Indicator 1.1.2)**

People in El Salvador were exposed to over 2,800 hours per year in which heat posed a moderate or higher risk of heat stress during moderate outdoor physical activity (e.g., brisk walking) between 2016 and 2025, over 400 hours more than the annual average in the 1990s. **(Indicator 1.1.2)**

Annual potential work hours lost, disaggregated by economic sector. El Salvador, 1990-2025.



Heat exposure caused an average annual loss of 349 million potential labour hours in El Salvador between 2016 and 2025, 53% higher than the annual average in the 1990s. Agriculture accounted for approximately 53% of these losses. **(Indicator 1.1.3)**

Heat-related labour capacity reduction in El Salvador caused an estimated potential earnings loss of approximately US$792 million in 2025, equivalent to 2.2% of national GDP. Construction accounted for approximately 36% of these losses. **(Indicator 4.1.3)**

Climate-Sensitive Disease Risks

Changes in temperature, rainfall and coastal conditions can increase environmental suitability for mosquito-borne and waterborne disease transmission. In El Salvador, conditions remain favourable for dengue transmission, while an expanding coastline suitable for Vibrio bacteria highlights additional risks from infections associated with coastal waters and contaminated seafood.

Environmental conditions in El Salvador remain highly suitable for dengue transmission.

The transmission potential (R_0) of dengue in El Salvador was 1.5% higher for Aedes aegypti mosquitoes and 55% higher for Aedes albopictus mosquitoes between 2016 and 2025 than in 1951–1960. Transmission potential remained above 1 for both mosquito vectors, indicating environmental conditions suitable for sustained transmission. **(Indicator 1.3.1)**

SPOTLIGHT: HEALTH IN CLIMATE POLICY AND RESEARCH

Health considerations in national climate commitments and scientific research can help inform responses to climate-sensitive health risks. In El Salvador, health remains reflected in national climate policy, while research continues to document the health impacts of climate change.

Approximately 185km of coastline was suitable for Vibrio transmission in El Salvador in 2025, compared with no suitable coastline in 1982–1991. Environmental conditions were suitable for transmission on 27 days during 2025. **(Indicator 1.3.2)**

El Salvador has mentioned health topics in all three of its NDCs. Health-related content rose from 13 mentions in 2015 to 132 in 2021, before falling to 76 in its most recent NDC in 2025; its latest submission mainly covered overall health, nutrition, and wellbeing. **(Indicator 5.4.1)**

El Salvador's updated NDC, submitted in December 2025, includes climate-informed epidemiological surveillance, integrated health information platforms and nationwide multi-hazard early warning systems, aligned with the Early Warnings for All initiative.(Indicator 2.2.1; Latin America Report)

An average of approximately six scientific papers on climate change and health focused on El Salvador annually between 2023 and 2025. All six papers published in 2025 examined the health impacts of climate change. **(Indicator 5.3.1)**

Energy Transition and Health

The use of polluting fuels contributes to harmful air pollution, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and premature mortality. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), El Salvador's annual mean concentration of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) was 22 μg/m^3, more than four times the WHO recommended annual guideline of 5 μg/m^3. Increasing household electrification powered by renewable energy and reducing fossil fuel combustion in transport can improve air quality, protect health and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2023, an estimated 207 deaths were attributable to household air pollution from dirty fuels, almost 60% fewer than in 2016. (Indicator 3.1.2; Latin America Report)

Electricity accounted for only 1.5% of fuels used for cooking in El Salvador in 2023. (Indicator 3.1.2; Latin America Report)

In 2023, El Salvador had no electricity use in road transport (0.003%). (Indicator 3.1.3; Latin America Report)

In 2023, low-carbon sources accounted for 52.2% of El Salvador's electricity generation, while renewable sources accounted for 33.4%. The carbon intensity of the overall energy system increased by 8.1% compared with 2016, reaching 41.1 tCO_2/TJ. (Indicator 3.1.1; Latin America Report)

Romanello M, Walawender M, Israelsson J et al. The 2026 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: A decade of escalating health harms and a decisive moment for all. The Lancet 2026; published online October 2026. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(26)01779-4
Hartinger S, Llerena-Cayo C, Strappa V et al. The 2026 Lancet Countdown Latin on Health and Climate Change for Latin America. The Lancet Regional Health – Americas, 2026
World Health Organization. Health and environment scorecard: El Salvador. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025.