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

A decade tracking progress on health and climate change

FRANCE

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DATA SHEET 2026

Health and Climate Change in France

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.

This document presents key country-level findings from the 2026 Lancet Countdown report for France.

Climate change is driving most of the heatwave days now experienced in France. Heatwave exposure among very young children and older adults has risen sharply, and heat-related deaths and lost working hours are imposing growing economic losses, particularly in construction.

France has reduced household fossil-fuel use, and its carbon-pricing revenues exceed fossil-fuel subsidies. However, road transport remains overwhelmingly reliant on fossil fuels, and preparedness for the low-carbon transition has weakened.

Warming coastal waters are expanding the stretch of France's coastline suitable for Vibrio bacteria, and estimated vibriosis cases have risen substantially. This underlines the need for integrated environmental and health surveillance.

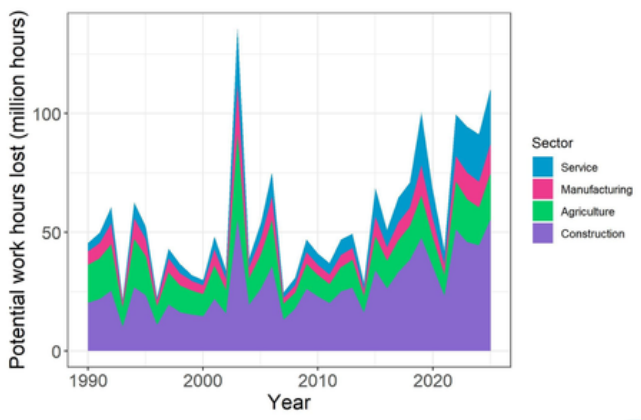
Heat and Health

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.

80.6% of heatwave days people in France were exposed to on average between 2021 and 2025 would not have been expected to occur without climate change. (Indicator 1.1.1)

Children under one year of age and adults over 65 experienced an average of 9 additional heatwave days per year between 2016 and 2025. This was an increase of 174% and 186%, respectively, compared with the 1986–2005 baseline. (Indicator 1.1.1)

Annual potential work hours lost, disaggregated by economic sector. France, 1990 to 2025.



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HEAT

Heat stress reduces labour productivity, undermining livelihoods and the social determinants of health, while heat-related deaths impose a growing cost on society.

- The average annual economic value of heat-related mortality losses in those over age 65 was US$8 billion between 2021 and 2025, which is equivalent to 457,800 average incomes of France. This is a 153% increase since 2000 to 2004. (Indicator 4.1.2)
- The potential income lost from reduced labour capacity due to heat was US$3 billion in 2025. Workers in the construction sector were the most severely affected, incurring 49% of the losses. (Indicator 4.1.3)

Heat exposure caused an annual loss of 79 million potential labour hours on average, between 2016 and 2025, which is 85% higher than the average year in the 1990s. The construction sector was most affected, accounting for almost 60% of losses. (Indicator 1.1.3)

People were exposed to 76 more hours of moderate or higher risk of heat stress if undertaking moderate outdoor physical activity (e.g., brisk walking) per year in 2016-2025 compared with the 1990s. (Indicator 1.1.2)

Air Pollution, Energy Transition, and Health Co-benefits

Fossil fuel combustion contributes to harmful air pollution, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and premature mortality. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), France's annual mean concentration of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) was 10 µg/m³, twice the WHO's recommended annual guideline of 5 µg/m³.1 Reducing dependence on polluting fuels can improve air quality and protect health, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

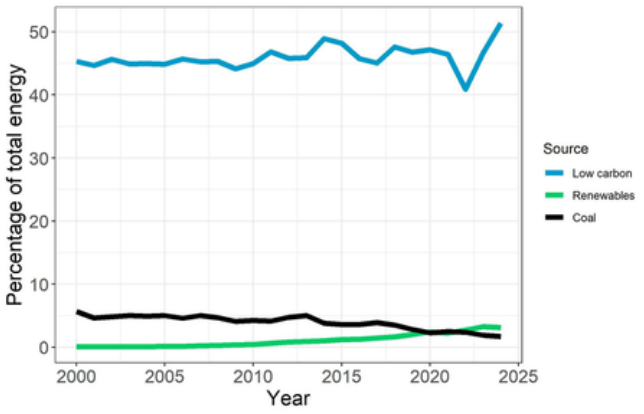
In 2023, the carbon intensity of France's energy system decreased to 29.3 tCO_2/TJ, 1.7% lower than in 2016. Coal made up almost 2% of total energy supply and 0.4% of electricity generation, a 79% decrease in its share of electricity since 2016. Low-carbon sources accounted for 46.7% of total energy supply and 90% of electricity generation in 2023. (Indicator 3.1.1)

In 2023, 36.5% of household energy still came from liquid fossil fuels and natural gas, down 18% since 2016, with a further 18.7% from harmful biomass. (Indicator 3.1.2)

In 2023, fossil fuels still accounted for 92% of all road transport energy, and electricity accounted for only 0.5%. (Indicator 3.1.3)

France had a net-positive carbon revenue in 2024, indicating that carbon prices were higher than fossil fuel subsidies. The country saw a net revenue of US$3.7 billion, which is equivalent to 1% of the national health budget. (Indicator 4.3.2)

Year-wise share of total energy by source. Each line shows how one energy source's share changes over time.



Vulnerability to Infectious Diseases

Climate change is increasing the suitability for transmission of many vector-, food- and water-borne diseases. In France, warming coastal waters are favouring Vibrio bacteria, while rising temperatures are making conditions more suitable for malaria-carrying mosquitoes, making integrated environmental and health surveillance increasingly important.

The number of months that were suitable for malaria transmission in France from 2016 to 2025 was 1 month for *P. vivax*, 29% higher compared to 1981 to1990. (Indicator 1.3.2)

The average length of coast suitable for *Vibrio* transmission was 21% greater in 2016 to 2025 compare to the 1982 to 1991 baseline, reaching 89.9 km. (Indicator 1.3.6)

Estimated vibriosis cases have increased 81.5% since 1982 to 1991, reaching an annual average of 2569 cases in 2016 to 2025. (Indicator 1.3.6)

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
World Health Organization (2023). Health and environment scorecard: France