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

A decade tracking progress on health and climate change

NETHERLANDS

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DATA SHEET 2026

Health and Climate Change in the Netherlands

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 the Netherlands.

Climate change is driving most of the heatwave days now experienced in the Netherlands, with the rising costs of heat-related deaths among older adults and of lost working hours placing a growing burden on health and livelihoods.

The Netherlands has rapidly expanded renewable electricity, but households and road transport remain heavily reliant on fossil fuels, sustaining health-harming air pollution.

Food-related emissions in the Netherlands have risen, with red meat and dairy still accounting for most of them, highlighting the need for stronger support for healthier, plant-rich diets.

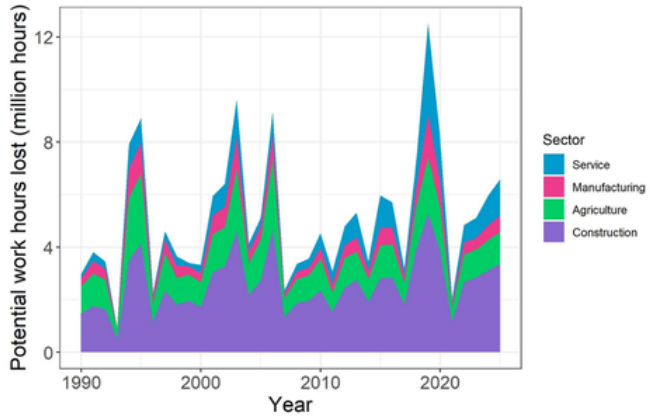
Heat and Health

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.

88% of the heatwave days that people in the Netherlands were, on average, exposed to between 2021 and 2025 would not have been expected to occur without climate change. (Indicator 1.1.1)

People were exposed to 19.7 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)

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



Heat exposure caused an annual loss of 6 million potential labour hours on average, between 2016 and 2025, which is 46% higher than the average year in the 1990s. (Indicator 1.1.3)

The potential income lost from reduced labour capacity due to heat was US$ 0.23 billion in 2025. Workers in the construction sector were the most severely affected, incurring 53.5% of the losses. (Indicator 4.1.3)

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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), Netherland's annual mean concentration of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) was 11 μg/m³, more than twice 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.

As of 2023, coal made up 6.7% of the Netherlands' total energy supply and 7% of electricity generation (a 77.5% decrease since 2016). Low-carbon sources accounted for 9% of total energy supply (a 235% increase since 2016) and 44% of electricity (a 265% increase since 2016), with renewables accounting for 7.2% of total energy supply (up 472% since 2016) and 40.5% of electricity (up 377% since 2016). (Indicator 3.1.1)

In 2023, 25% of household energy came from electricity; however, 66% came from fossil fuels (liquid fossil fuels and natural gas). (Indicator 3.1.2)

In 2023, fossil fuels still accounted for 92% of all road transport energy, and electricity accounted for only 2%. (Indicator 3.1.3)

The Netherlands had a net-negative carbon revenue in 2024, indicating that carbon prices were lower than fossil fuel subsidies. The country saw a net subsidy of US$30.3 billion, which is equivalent to 24% of the national health budget. (Indicator 4.3.2)

Diet and Health

Shifting to healthier, plant-rich diets can reduce agricultural emissions and improve health outcomes. In Netherlands, diet-related risks contribute to preventable deaths and chronic disease burden.

The emissions associated with demand for agricultural food products increased by 6% between 2016 and 2023. Red meat and dairy emissions decreased by 1.6% in the same time period and accounted for 60% of all consumption-related emissions in 2023. (Indicator 3.3.1)

Vulnerability to Infectious Diseases

Climate change is increasing the suitability for transmission of many vector-, food-, and water-borne diseases. In the Netherlands, changing temperature and precipitation patterns are expanding the risk zones for vibriosis and other climate-sensitive diseases.

The length of coast suitable for *Vibrio* transmission was 203% greater in 2025 than in the 1982 to 1991 baseline, reaching 271 km. Estimated vibriosis cases have increased 46.4% since 1982 to 1991, reaching an annual average of 5,900 cases in 2016 to 2025 and a record-breaking 6,200 cases in the year 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: Netherlands