## Indicator 2.2.3: Urban Green Space

*Headline finding: The proportion of urban centers with at least moderate or better levels of greenness increased from 13% to 17% from 2022 to 2023 in countries with the lowest HDI (Human Development Index).*

Green spaces serve to reduce the intensity of heat islands at the neighborhood scale in urban centers, while positively affecting physical and mental health. (1-4) The indicator of urban green space uses Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) from Landsat satellite data to estimate greenspace exposure on a 30 x 30 km grid for 1041 urban centers across 174 countries (see Figure 1). Global average NDVI has remained at 0.34 since 2015, however, average levels and time trends can vary non-linearly by HDI level, WHO region, Lancet countdown region, and climate regions (see appendix). 33% (a reduction from 36% in 2022) of urban centers in very high HDI countries had at least moderate levels of greenness, vs 18% in high, 41% in medium (an increase from 36% in 2022), and 17% in low HDI countries (an increase from 13% in 2022, see Figure 2). The Eastern Mediterranean WHO region exhibited the lowest peak NDVI for all years, with the highest in the Southeast Asia region. Amongst the Lancet Countdown country groupings, the Africa and South and Central America regions had the lowest peak NDVI.



Figure 1: Urban greenness in urban centers with more than 500,000 inhabitants in 2024 (Panel A). Urban greenness is characterized by the population-weighted peak (greenest) season Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI). Panel B shows the percent change in the population-weighted peak-season NDVI between a baseline period (2015-2020) and 2024.

#### References

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