## Indicator 2.2.3: Urban Green Space

*Headline finding: Globally, urban greenspace has remained stable over the past decade. However, peak-season NDVI has varied substantially across individual cities. In 2024, greenspace increased slightly from the 2015-2020 average (0.2%), worldwide, with individual city changes ranging from -34% to +69%.*

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 population-weighted peak-season NDVI has remained the same since 2015 (0.28). While NDVI has remained stable over the past decade on a global, and even regional, scale, 2024 brought large changes in greenness across individual cities, with NDVI diverging from 2015-2020 levels by as much as -34% to +69%. On average, cities with “Very High” and “High” Human Development Indices (HDI) experienced slight increases in NDVI in 2024 (+1.6%), while those with “Medium” and “Low” indices experienced slight decreases (-2.1% and -1.7%, respectively). However, there was a large spread within each HDI category. Amongst the Lancet Countdown country groupings, the South and Central America, Africa, and Asia regions had the lowest peak NDVI across all years.



Figure 1: Level of 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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