AUDITOR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT OF JAMAICA

CLIMATESCANNER

Assessment of Jamaica's Climate Response

February 2026

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This report was prepared by the Auditor General's Department of Jamaica for presentation to the House of Representatives.

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'A better Country through effective audit scrutiny'

Auditor General of Jamaica
Auditor General's Department
40 Knutsford Boulevard
Kingston 5, Jamaica, W.I.
www.auditorgeneral.gov.jm

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S OVERVIEW

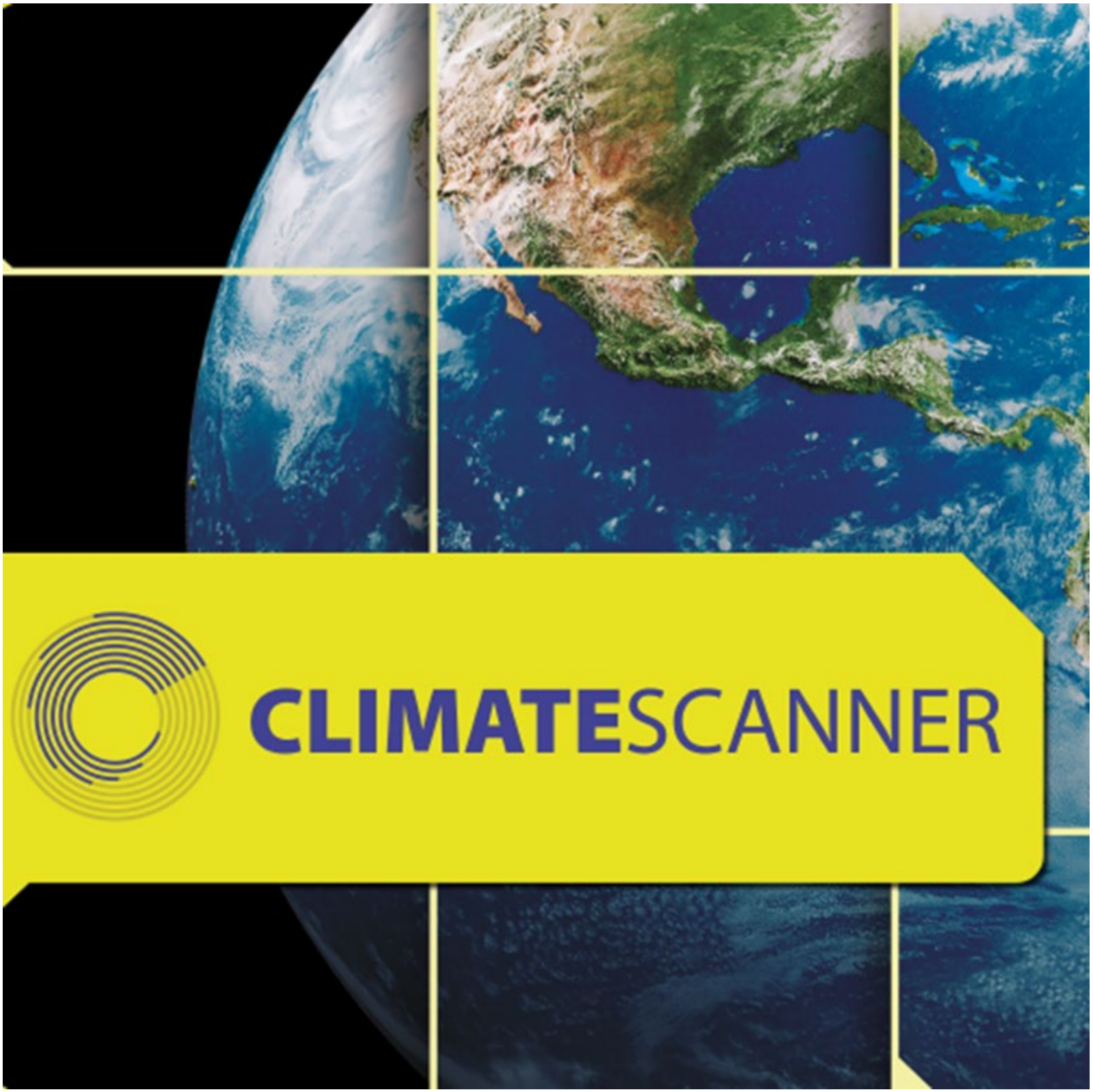
The ClimateScanner Assessment was conducted as part of a global initiative led by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), in collaboration with its Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA). The objective of this initiative was to conduct a rapid, high-level review of national government responses to climate change across three axes: Governance, Public Policies, and Climate Finance. For Jamaica, the assessment provided valuable insights into how effectively climate action has been institutionalized, the development and implementation of relevant policies, and the mobilization and tracking of financial resources to meet both national and international climate commitments.

Given Jamaica's exposure to climate-related risks, particularly as a Small Island Developing State (SID), this assessment served as a strategic opportunity to benchmark national efforts and identify key areas for improvement. This report presents the findings of Jamaica's ClimateScanner Assessment, offering a comprehensive snapshot of national progress across the three axes. The insights gained aim to support continuous improvement in building climate resilience, strengthen Jamaica's contribution to global climate goals, and inform future audit engagements. The assessment also complemented the AuGD's ongoing environmental audits by identifying implementation gaps and highlighting good practices in the Government of Jamaica's climate response.

I encourage the relevant entities to take proactive steps in addressing the gaps identified and to promote a more integrated, accountable, and results-oriented approach to climate resilience planning and execution.

Thanks to the management and staff of the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, the Climate Change Division and other stakeholders for their valuable cooperation and assistance throughout the assessment process.

Pamela Monroe Ellis, FCCA, FCA
Auditor General


CLIMATESCANNER

SUMMARY

The ClimateScanner Assessment provides a comprehensive analysis of Jamaica's climate resilience, adaptation strategies, and mitigation targets. This report presents the results of our rapid assessment, highlighting Jamaica's efforts and progress in aligning with international climate commitments and addressing the challenges faced by our vulnerable sectors such as tourism, health, coastal resources, housing, and water.

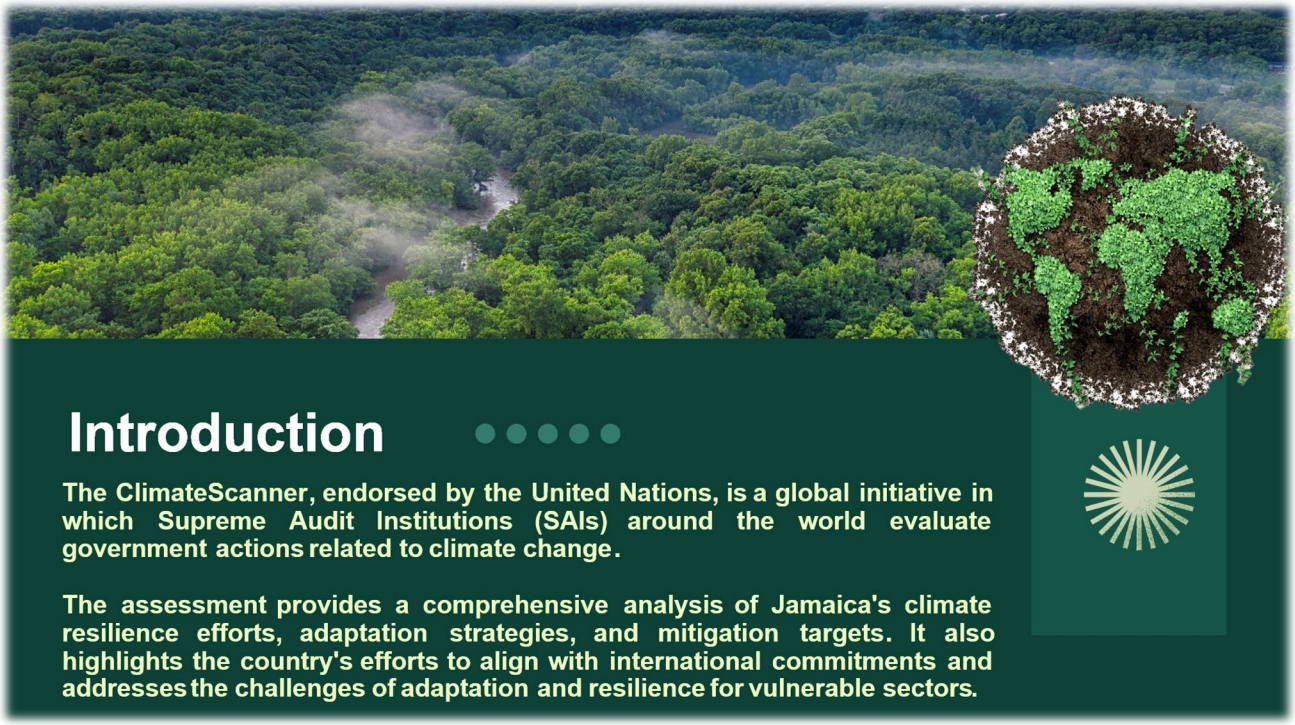
The ClimateScanner assessment revealed that Jamaica has made notable progress in advancing its climate agenda through strategic planning, institutional development, and increased ambition in climate policy. Across all three axes - governance, public policy, and climate finance - Jamaica demonstrated a clear commitment to aligning with international frameworks, including the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The adoption of the Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF) and the Long-Term Emissions Reduction and Climate-Resilience Strategy (LTS) marked important steps in formalizing climate governance and long-term vision. However, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) needs to meet its commitment to develop climate legislation to create legally enforceable standards and oversight mechanisms as well as ensure that efforts towards strengthening coordination between national and local levels are achieved.

In public policy, the updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of 2020 broadened sectoral coverage and introduced ambitious targets. Sectoral mitigation and adaptation strategies were developed, particularly in energy, forestry, waste, and water management. Nonetheless, challenges were noted in implementing these strategies due to resource limitations, inter-agency coordination gaps, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Notably, Jamaica is in the process of developing its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with the goal of establishing an inclusive, systematic and participatory national adaptation planning and implementation framework by 2026.

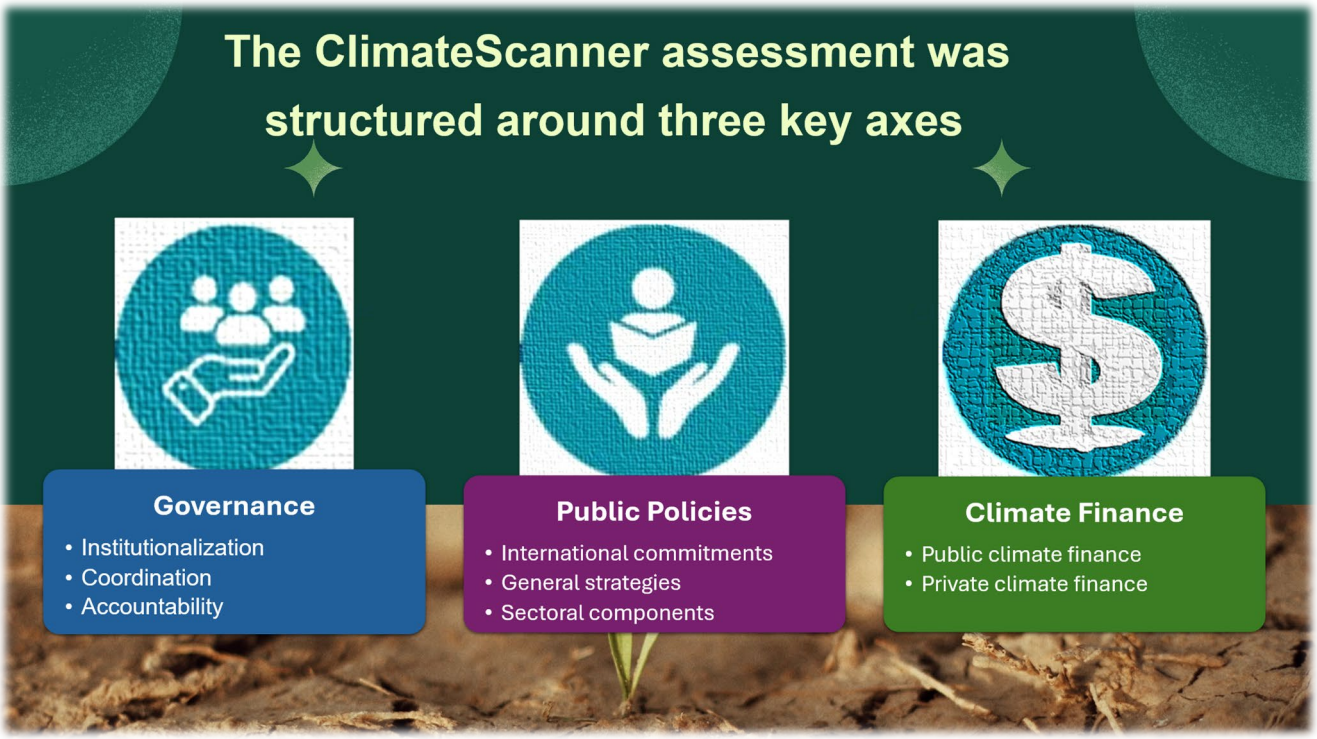
In the area of climate finance, Jamaica took steps to integrate climate priorities into public budgets and secured funding from international sources such as the Green Climate Fund. However, financial tracking was fragmented with no comprehensive system in place to monitor public, private, and indirect climate finance across sectors. Finance tracking focused mainly on public-private projects, leaving purely private investments underreported.

While foundational policies, plans, and partnerships were in place, implementation and accountability mechanisms needed to be strengthened. Enhanced data management, stakeholder inclusion, capacity building, and the development of sector-specific financing strategies will be critical in accelerating progress toward climate resilience. Jamaica's performance under the ClimateScanner assessment reflects both meaningful strides and clear opportunities for improved coordination, transparency, and long-term sustainability in its climate response.

INTRODUCTION



The insights gained from Jamaica's ClimateScanner assessment helped guide the AuGD's Performance Audit on Jamaica's Progress Towards Implementation of Climate Adaptation Actions and Plans. The results of the review will be published in a separate report. The Assessment results will also support future planning and prioritization of environmental audits, ensuring greater accountability and support for climate-resilient development.



Assessment components

GOVERNANCE	PUBLIC POLICIES	FINANCE
G1. Legal and regulatory framework	P1. Nationally Determined Contribution	F1. Domestic climate finance
G2. Government structure	P2. Mitigation strategy	F2. International climate finance: provider countries
G3. Long-term strategy	P3. National adaptation plans and strategies	F3. International climate finance: recipient countries
G4. Risk management	P4. Mitigation sectors	F4. Domestic and international private climate finance mechanisms
G5. Horizontal and vertical coordination	P5. Adaptation sectors	
G6. Stakeholder engagement		
G7. Inclusiveness		
G8. Monitoring mechanisms		
G9. Transparency		
G10. Oversight and climate litigation		

ClimateScanner Main Objectives

Source: ClimateScanner Handbook

Together, these objectives were aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making in addressing the climate crisis.

Assessment Limitation

The ClimateScanner is a rapid assessment tool designed to determine the existence of mechanisms, systems, and policies in each country, rather than evaluating their effectiveness or outcomes. Assessing these latter aspects would require a more comprehensive review, which falls outside the scope of the tool but could inform the need for a formal audit. Our review did not include verification of technical or scientific data; instead, we relied on information provided by the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) we engaged with. Additionally, the assessment did not extend to non-governmental or private sector organizations.

How the Assessment was Conducted

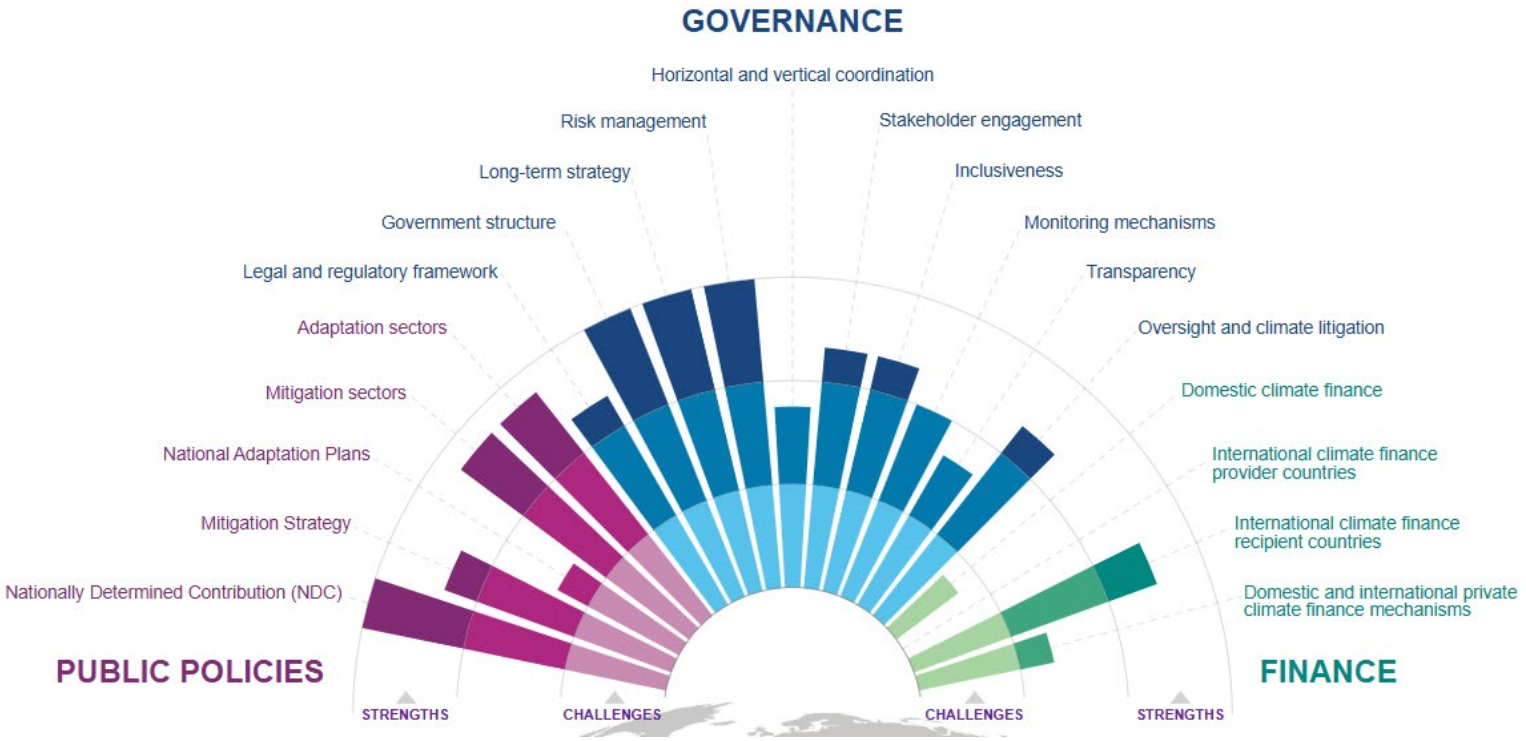
Guided by the standardized framework developed by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), in partnership with its Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA), the AuGD conducted its assessment using the ClimateScanner Rapid Review Tool Framework, which is aimed to ensure consistency across participating Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). The AuGD reviewed Jamaica's national policies, plans and documents submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Information was also obtained from the Climate Change Division, of the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC), as well as publicly available information from other relevant MDAs and stakeholders. The data gathered was measured against the ClimateScanner criteria to assess their level of implementation.

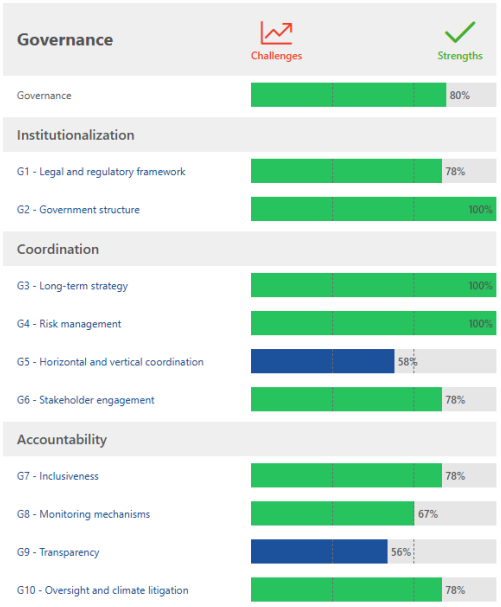
Each component was assessed on a four-tier implementation scale, with scores ranging from 0 (no implementation) to 10 (advanced implementation). A score of 3.33 or lower signalled a challenge, while 6.66 or higher indicated a strength. The ClimateScanner Web Application automatically calculated the average score for each component based on the assessed items. Components deemed irrelevant to Jamaica's context were marked "not applicable".

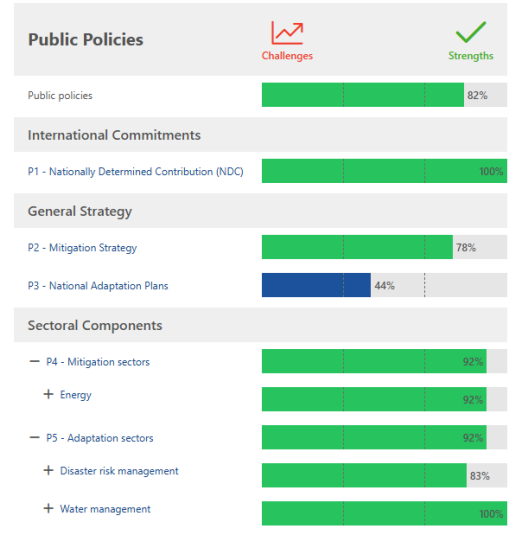
Level of Implementation	Numerical Score Associated	Definition
No implementation	**0**	No relevant aspects of item are present
Early implementation	**3.33**	Few relevant aspects of item present, but there is considerable room for improvement
Intermediate implementation	**6.66**	Many aspects of item are present, but there is still room for improvement
Advanced implementation	**10**	All or nearly all relevant aspects of items are present

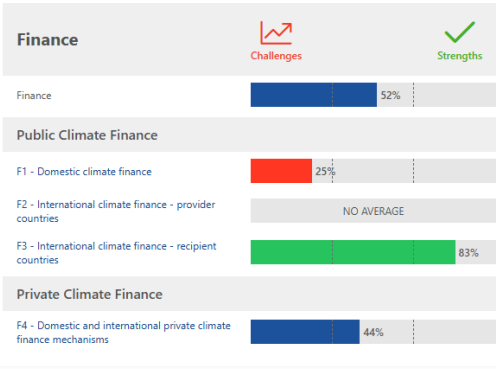
Source: ClimateScanner Handbook

JAMAICA'S CLIMATESCANNER RESULTS





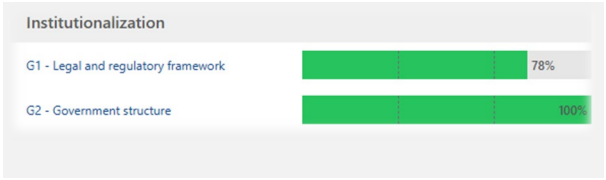




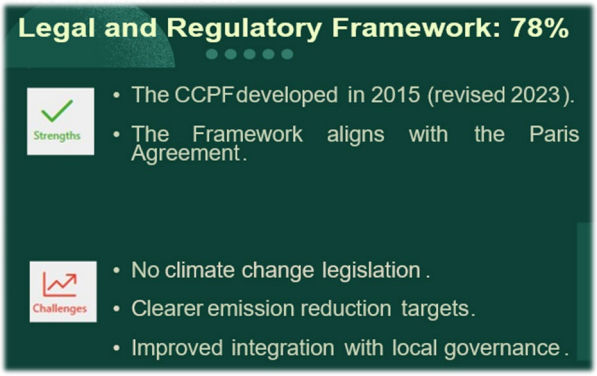
Governance

This assessment evaluated key components of climate governance to determine how effectively a country supports its climate change mitigation and adaptation goals. These included the presence of a national legal and regulatory framework, institutional governance structures, and long-term strategies such as those submitted to the UNFCCC. It considered the adequacy of risk management, coordination mechanisms across and within levels of government, and the degree of stakeholder engagement, including civil society, the private sector, and academia. The assessment also examined inclusiveness - ensuring vulnerable and marginalized groups are considered in climate decision-making - alongside the existence of robust monitoring systems to track implementation and progress towards Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitments. Finally, it reviewed the transparency of climate policies and the role of legislative oversight and climate litigation in enforcing accountability.

Institutionalisation



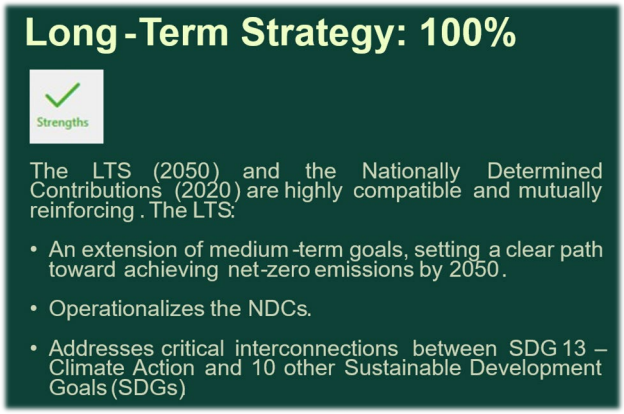
Jamaica has made significant progress in establishing a strong climate governance framework, despite the absence of climate change specific legislation. The Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF) for Jamaica, guides national efforts and serves as a foundation for future legislation. It aligns with key principles of the Paris Agreement, such as transparency and NDCs, and provides high-level direction for integrating climate considerations into national, sectoral, and budgetary planning. While the CCPF sets out ambitious mitigation and adaptation strategies, its implementation is reinforced by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service (MoFPS) Circular No. 34, which mandates climate risk assessments for all public investment proposals. Together, these instruments enabled systematic mainstreaming of climate action, though full alignment would benefit from enforceable legislative backing and more detailed enforceable targets to enhance implementation and accountability.



Institutional coordination was led by then Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation's (MEGJC) Climate Change Division (CCD), supported by the Climate Change Advisory Board (CCAB), Climate Change Focal Point Network (CCFPN), and National Transparency Working Group. The CCPF and Terms of References for the CCAB and CCFPN clearly delineate roles for oversight, implementation, and coordination across numerous MDAs. However, while responsibilities are well-defined and not inherently contradictory, the large number of actors increases reliance on effective coordination to avoid operational inefficiencies and ensure real-time data sharing and transparency.

Strategy

The approval of Jamaica's Long-Term Emissions Reduction and Climate-Resilience Strategy (LTS), in November 2023, underscored the country's commitment to strategic, long-term climate action. The LTS aligned closely with Jamaica's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), explicitly mapping linkages with key goals. The strategy assessed the potential synergies and trade-offs across these SDGs and outlined approaches to enhance positive impacts and mitigate adverse ones, reinforcing a whole-of-society and whole-of-economy transition.



The integration of risk information into Jamaica's planning instruments was both comprehensive and evidence-based. National and medium-term frameworks, and MoFPS Circular No. 34 incorporated climate risks and mandated their consideration in development planning and public investments.

The identification and assessment of climate risks were firmly grounded in scientific evidence. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) *State of the Jamaican Climate Volume III (2022)* provided updated national-level risk mapping based on climate projections and historical trends. Furthermore, Jamaica's Climate Stress Testing Data Management Framework (June 2024) highlighted the importance of using scientifically derived climate data and methodologies for assessing systemic financial risks related to climate change.

Coordination

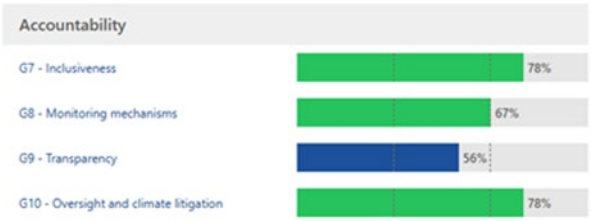
Jamaica established formal institutional mechanisms for horizontal coordination on climate change, supported by high-level leadership. MEGJC/CCD leads national climate efforts and serves as the UNFCCC focal point. The CCAB and the CCFPN provided structured platforms for inter-ministerial coordination, with representation from MDAs.

In contrast, vertical coordination - between national and subnational levels - remained underdeveloped. While the CCFP acknowledged the role of local government and proposed the creation of a Local Government Network as a formal coordination mechanism, this was not done. Some vertical coordination channels existed; but there were no formal and robust institutional mechanisms dedicated to vertical climate change coordination beyond general inter-ministerial relations or project-based interactions. Local Government engagement and the integration of climate change into parish development plans reflected some progress. However, weak institutional capacity, limited parish-level engagement, and the absence of structured, ongoing, regular, and dynamic coordination mechanisms hindered effective vertical alignment.

The CCPF established the CCAB and CCFPN as key channels for stakeholder engagement in Jamaica's climate policy, planning, and implementation. It stipulated the inclusion of stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, and academia. Membership review of the CCAB confirms participation from all four sectors, indicating a deliberate effort to ensure broad stakeholder inclusion in climate decision-making. However, the dynamic of interaction within these mechanisms were inconsistent. While the structures existed, evidence of regular engagement was limited, particularly for the CCFPN.

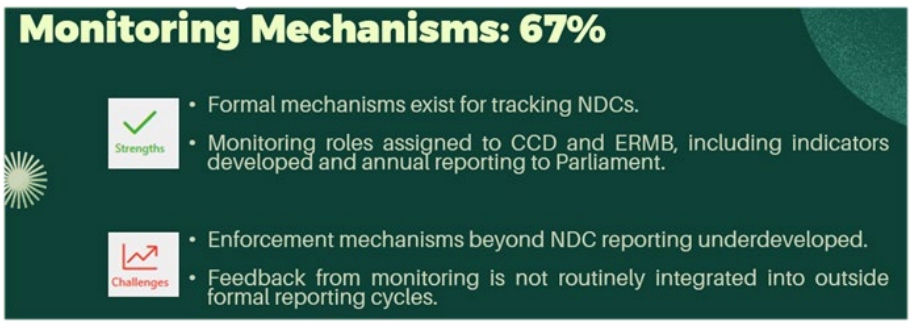
Accountability

Jamaica's climate governance reflected strong alignment with the "leave no one behind" principle. Vulnerable groups - such as women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, rural communities, and those reliant on climate-sensitive livelihoods - were clearly recognized in relation to social protection, adaptation, and climate resilience. However, the inclusion of vulnerable groups in climate decision-making remained limited in practice, with weak or insufficient mechanisms for engagement with local actors and marginalized communities. Vision 2030 embedded equity through a strong social protection agenda, with tailored support for specific vulnerable demographics. However, despite strong policy intent and identification of vulnerable groups, improved implementation was required to ensure their meaningful and systematic participation in decision-making and to operationalize equity commitments.



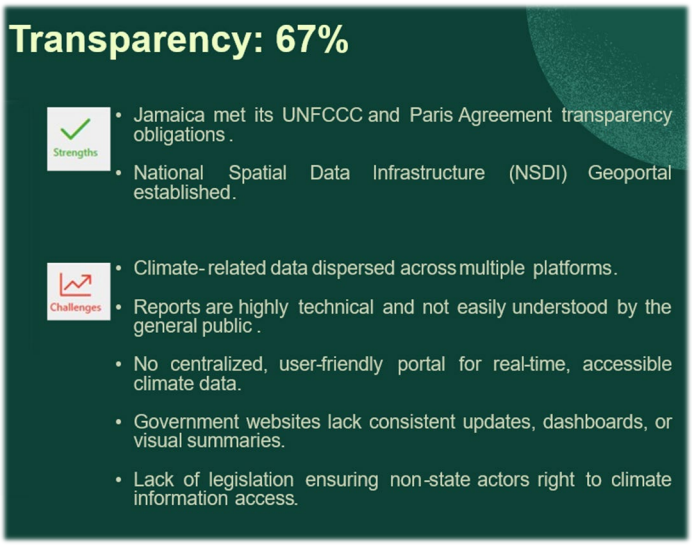
Jamaica had formal mechanisms for tracking climate commitments under its NDCs, including Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory systems and reporting through Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and National Communications (NCs) to the UNFCCC. These mechanisms were coordinated by the CCD and supported the implementation of the CCPF. The CCPF assigned monitoring roles to the CCD and the Environment and Risk Management Branch (ERMB), including developing monitoring and evaluation indicators and strategies as well as annual reporting to Parliament. However, enforcement mechanisms for compliance beyond NDC reporting remained underdeveloped. Further, while a legislative framework is planned to institutionalize coordination, evaluation, and accountability provisions, it has not yet been enacted.

The use of feedback from monitoring activities beyond the reporting cycle remained insufficiently institutionalized. While the CCD was tasked with coordinating climate activities and disseminating information across MDAs, structured processes to routinely integrate monitoring feedback into ongoing policy adjustments, outside formal reporting periods, were not clearly defined.



As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Jamaica met its transparency obligations under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, having submitted its NCs and BUR1. Jamaica also established the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Geoportal, which enhanced access to geospatial data relevant to climate vulnerability and land use. However, the platform did not explicitly track or communicate progress toward national climate objectives, and there was currently no system in place to consolidate indicators or results aligned with the targets in the NDC or other national strategies.

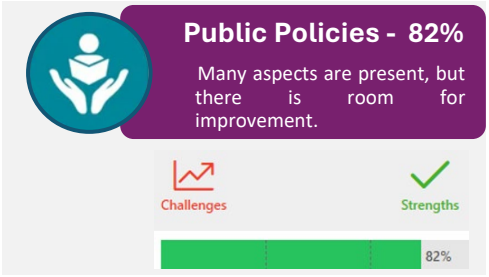
The National Risk Information Platform (NRIP), intended to serve this purpose, was non-functional, limiting its role as a progress-monitoring tool. While technical reports such as the NCs and the *State of the Jamaican Climate* series (2015, 2019, 2022) were publicly accessible via platforms like PIOJ, UWI, and the UNFCCC, they were highly technical, infrequently updated, and not presented in formats easily understood by the general public. Further, Jamaica lacked a centralized, user-friendly climate information portal and legal provisions for public access, hindering transparency and engagement in climate policy implementation.



Parliament did not have a dedicated climate change committee, but several standing oversight committees such as the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC), Infrastructure and Physical Development Committee, Economy and Production Committee, and the Human Resources and Social Development Committee had mandates that enabled them to consider climate-related matters.

Jamaica does not currently have documented domestic climate litigation cases. Legal actions published by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) focused on general environmental enforcement, such as breaches of permits and pollution violations - not climate change litigation. Further, while Jamaica participated in international legal proceedings before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on climate obligations, there was no evidence that national courts adjudicated climate-related claims. The absence of climate specific legislation rendered the judiciary unprepared to adjudicate claims related to issues regarding climate change.

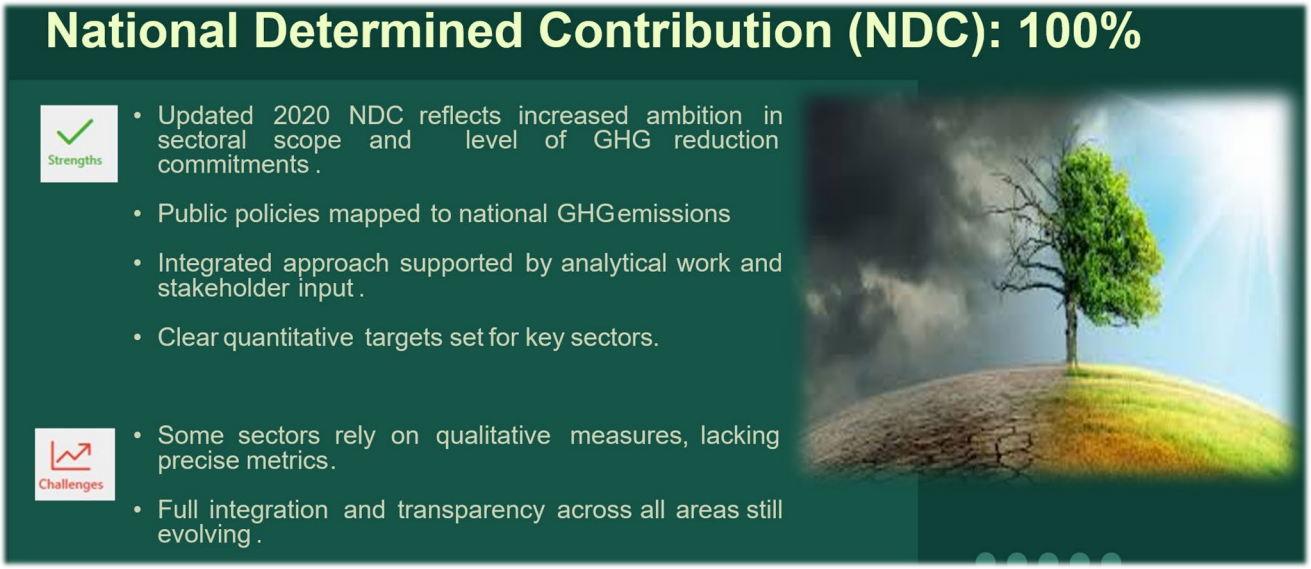
Public Policy



This assessment examined the extent to which a country's climate commitments and strategies align with the goals of the Paris Agreement. It evaluated the ambition and specificity of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), particularly whether it included updated, sector-specific targets. The assessment also considered the presence and coherence of national mitigation strategies, including mapped policies and plans to reduce GHG emissions across key sectors. Additionally, it reviewed the existence and quality of national adaptation plans and strategies aimed at minimizing climate impacts on socioeconomic systems and public well-being. Finally, it assessed how mitigation and adaptation efforts were implemented within the country's most relevant sectors.

International Commitments

Jamaica demonstrated progress in aligning its public policies with international climate commitments, particularly through the submission and increased ambition of its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2020. This revised NDC reflected a clear advancement from the 2015 submission, broadening its sectoral coverage beyond energy to include land use change and forestry, while also incorporating waste and agriculture, and embedding adaptation co-benefits. This signalled a shift toward a more integrated and transparent climate agenda. While quantitative targets were defined for specific sectors, other areas were addressed through qualitative measures, reflecting a phased pathway toward greater coverage and economy-wide transformation.



General Strategies

Jamaica also mapped key public policies to national GHG emissions and developed strategies across sectors such as energy, waste, and forestry. Notably, sectoral plans were robust, featuring actions such as renewable energy expansion, grid modernization, reforestation, climate-resilient agriculture, biogas promotion, and waste reduction. The development of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), a "No Net Loss of Forestry" policy, and the Transportation Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan further illustrated Jamaica's long-term commitment to decarbonization.

While Jamaica does not yet have a finalized National Adaptation Plan, steps were taken toward its development. Activities under the Ja-NAP initiative, alongside Jamaica's CCPF and Adaptation Communication, reflected ongoing efforts to strengthen adaptation planning.

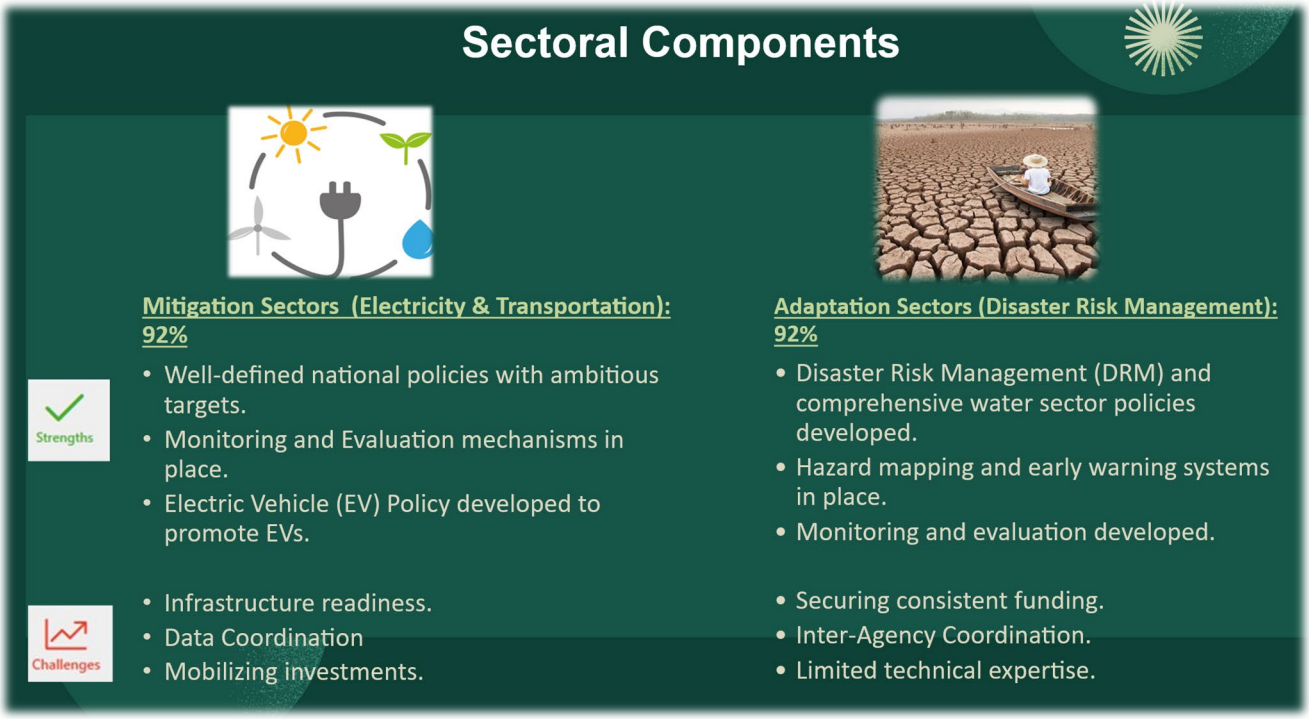
In 2017, Jamaica identified 12 priority sectors for climate adaptation. By 2021, plans were developed for five - coastal resources, health, housing, tourism, and water - while the remaining seven, including agriculture, energy, and transport, lacked dedicated strategies, highlighting a gap in national coverage. However, in 2022, adaptation planning was carried out in 15 vulnerable communities, addressing multi-sectoral risks at the local level.

Sectoral Components

In mitigation, we identified the energy sector, particularly electricity and transportation, as highly relevant for Jamaica's climate mitigation effort due to the country's heavy reliance on petroleum products for electricity generation - a major source of GHG emissions. In this regard, we found that the national policies for electricity and transportation were clearly defined, with ambitious targets such as 50% renewable energy by 2030 and full electrification of the government vehicle fleet.[1] Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms supported these policies, although challenges were noted with infrastructure readiness, data coordination, and investment mobilization.

Jamaica's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy integrated climate adaptation through hazard mapping, community outreach, and early warning systems, with clear role assignments. However, implementation was limited by funding, coordination, and technical capacity. The water sector also emphasized resilience via resource management, infrastructure standards, and monitoring, but faced similar barriers.

Jamaica established monitoring and evaluation systems across both mitigation and adaptation sectors, supported by defined indicators, responsible entities, and periodic review mechanisms. While opportunities remain to further detail feedback loops and operational methodologies, these frameworks reflected a structured approach to tracking progress. Overall, Jamaica made strong advances in climate policy and planning, with continued focus needed on enhancing cross-sectoral coherence, securing sustainable financing, and strengthening technical capacity and implementation and monitoring systems.



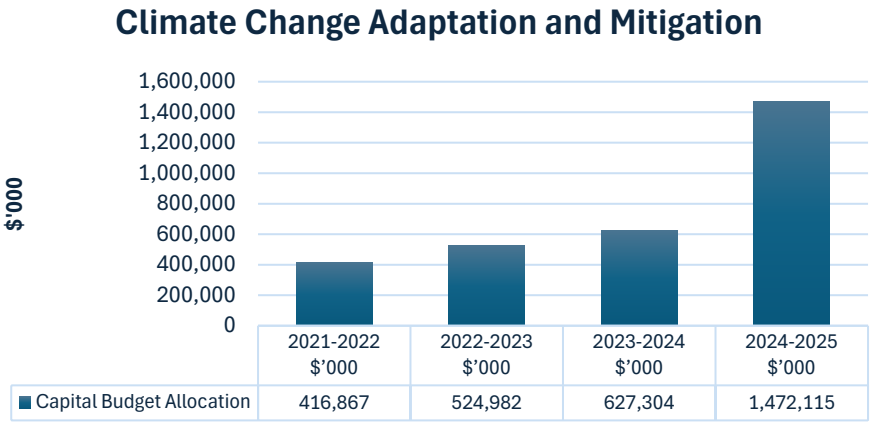
[1] Jamaica's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), page 67 - progression towards meeting the renewable energy portfolio standard of 50%.

Climate Finance

This assessment evaluated the effectiveness of climate finance systems in supporting national climate goals, as defined by the UNFCCC. It considered how well a country mobilizes, allocates, and tracks both domestic and international resources, public and private, for climate mitigation and adaptation. For recipient countries, it assessed the capacity to access and manage international finance, while for provider countries, it reviewed how they deliver support through funding, technology transfer, and capacity building. The assessment also examined whether domestic funds were aligned with national climate strategies and whether mechanisms were in place to monitor and report on both public and private climate finance flows.

Public Climate Finance

Between FY2021/22 and FY2024/25, Jamaica progressively aligned public climate finance with national priorities under Vision 2030, , specifically prioritizing capital funding for Environmental Management and Climate Change. Over this period, the allocation to MEGJC's Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation sub-programme increased steadily, from $416.9 million in FY2021/22 to $627.3 million in FY2023/24, before significantly rising to $1,472 million in FY2024/25. This represents a 253 per cent increase overall, underscoring the GOJ's strengthened fiscal priority for climate resilience and mitigation capacity.

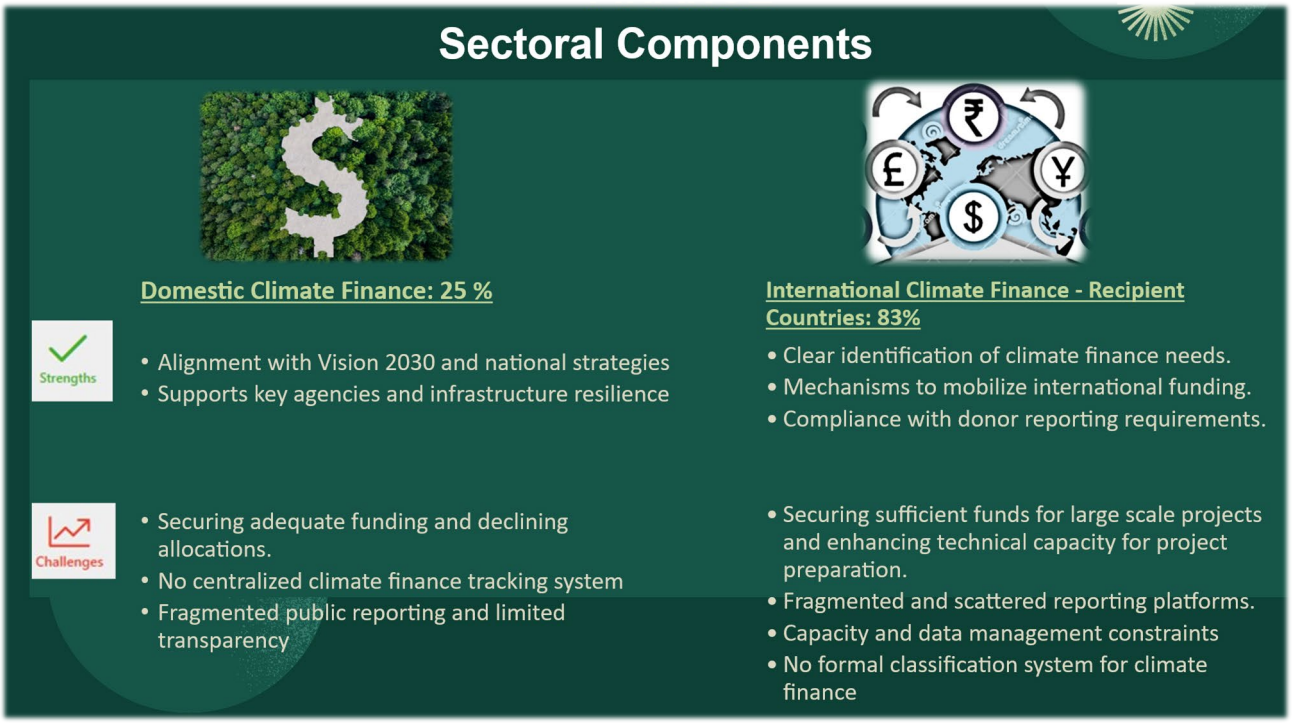


Source: AuGD Analysis of the 2021-2022 to 2024-2025 Estimates of Expenditure

While some cross-ministerial spending supported climate goals, Jamaica lacked a cohesive system to track total public finance for climate adaptation and mitigation. Developing a centralized climate budget tagging system and improving transparency would enhance alignment with national and international commitments. Although mechanisms existed to track direct climate finance—such as from the Green Climate Fund—there was no formal classification or comprehensive framework to monitor both direct and indirect climate finance across sectors.

Reporting on public climate finance exists but was fragmented and not consistently available to the public. For example, while the PIOJ manages climate finance tracking through the International Development Cooperation Management System (IDCMS), other reports on spending emanated from the CCD or the MDA responsible for

managing or implementing a climate change initiative. This fragmentation could make it challenging for the public to access all relevant information in one centralized location, leading to gaps in comprehensive public oversight.

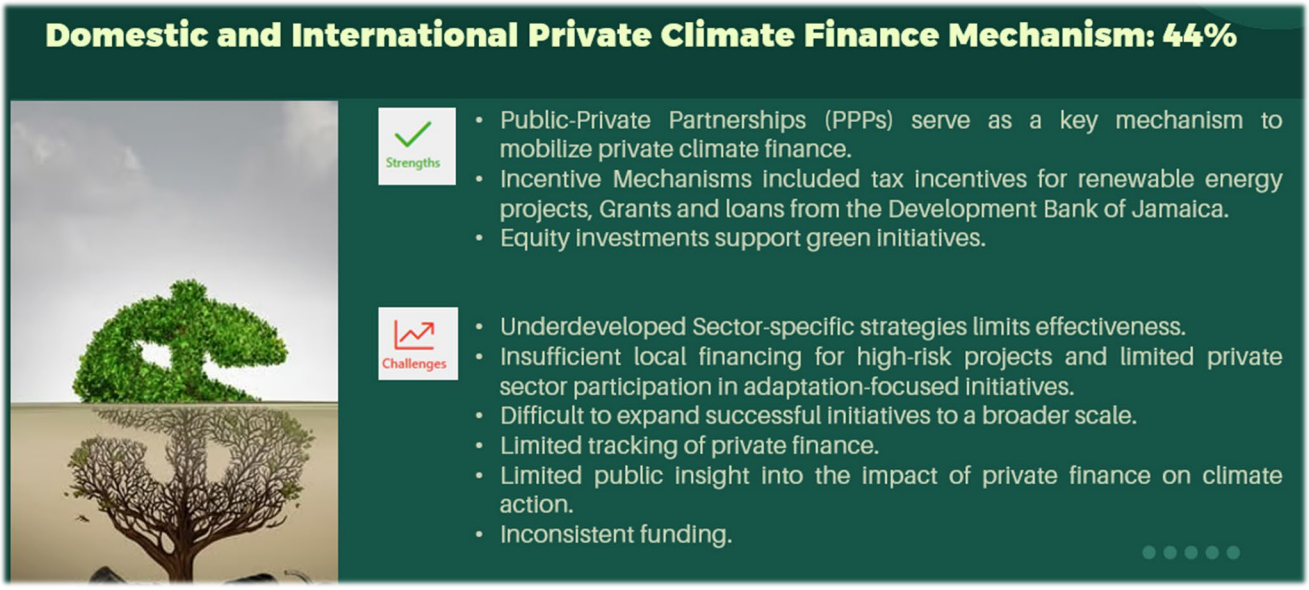


As a non-Annex II country under the UNFCCC, Jamaica was not obligated to provide international climate finance; therefore, the assessment of its role as a provider country was not applicable[2]. However, as a recipient country, Jamaica made notable progress in identifying its climate finance needs and aligning them with both national and international commitments. Jamaica also established mechanisms to mobilize international funding and improve oversight of disbursement. Nonetheless, there were capacity and data management constraints that hindered more effective implementation and oversight.

[2] As a non-Annex II country, Jamaica is not obligated to provide financial or technical support to other member countries under the UNFCCC.

Private Climate Finance

In terms of private climate finance, Jamaica created pathways for mobilization through public-private partnerships (PPPs), tax incentives, and blended finance tools. Key instruments included Development Bank of Jamaica grants and loans, equity investments, and tax credits for renewable energy. However, despite these advances, sector-specific strategies were underdeveloped, and scalability remained a challenge. Tracking private finance was limited, particularly for initiatives without government involvement, and reporting largely overlooked the outcomes and flows of purely private investments.



Overall, Jamaica made significant strides in planning and mobilizing both public and international climate finance, but there is need for more consistent funding, comprehensive tracking systems, and improved transparency, especially regarding indirect and private climate finance.

CONCLUSION

Jamaica has made meaningful progress in climate governance by aligning policies with global commitments, mobilizing climate finance, and developing key strategies such as its Long-Term Emissions Reduction and Climate-Resilience Strategy and updated NDC. Institutional structures and budgeting frameworks increasingly reflected climate priorities. However, gaps remained, including the absence of dedicated climate legislation, weak coordination with local authorities, limited stakeholder engagement, and insufficient inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Climate monitoring and finance systems are evolving but lacked centralized, real-time public access. Legislative oversight and stakeholder accountability are also improving but remained fragmented, and the judiciary has yet to engage in climate enforcement. Advancing enforceable legislation, strengthening institutional coordination - especially locally - enhancing inclusive engagement, and integrating monitoring and finance tracking systems are critical. These steps will boost transparency, build resilience, and support a low-carbon development path aligned with national and global goals.

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- 2022 Jamaica Integrated Resource Plan – 2018 IRP Review and Update
- 2050 Long-Term Emission Reduction and Climate Resilient Strategy for Jamaica, 2023
- 2050 Pathways Platform Terms of Reference for Assessing Cost and Benefits of Jamaica's 2050 Long-Term Emission Reduction and Climate Resilient Strategy
- A National Water Resources Master Plan for Jamaica, 2022
- Adaptation Program and Financing Mechanism for PPCR Jamaica (Project Profile)
- Beach Access and Management Policy for Jamaica, 2020
- Biennial Update Report of Jamaica
- CC–Connect Newsletters
- Circular No. 34 – Climate Risk Assessment Incorporated into the Appraisal of Public Investment Projects
- Climate Change Adaptation Plans (Coastal, Health, Housing Tourism, Water)
- Climate Change Advisory Board Terms of Reference
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