

Elements of Climate Accountability Frameworks and Best Practices in their Implementation

ELEMENT	BEST PRACTICES
Formalizing climate governance structures and processes Establishing a set of governance structures and formal processes for setting, meeting, and monitoring progress against a country's long-term emissions targets.	Legislating governance structures and processes and long-term targets Cementing a long-term emissions reduction target in law, as well as a broader governance framework, increases government accountability for reaching targets while also supporting transparency, credibility, and predictability.
Clearly defining roles and responsibilities Outlining the duties of specific institutions as they relate to the attainment of long-term targets.	Ensuring independent advice and assessment Having advice and assessment provided independently of government can help depoliticize climate policy debates and ensure that governments are receiving evidence-based, non-partisan advice. Supporting a whole-of-government approach Distributing responsibility for climate policy and target attainment across a wide range of government actors supports collaboration and cooperation across policy areas, thereby increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of climate policy overall.
Establishing interim emissions reduction milestones Setting interim emissions reduction milestones as a way of setting out a path to long-term targets.	Providing clarity on how milestones are set and how they will evolve Extending milestone planning at least 10 to 15 years into the future and defining clear and codified rules and processes for how milestones are set and when they can be adjusted increases predictability and accountability. Defining emissions reduction milestones in terms of cumulative carbon budgets Defining emissions reduction milestones as cumulative carbon budgets provides a meaningful measure of a jurisdiction's contribution to global climate change mitigation. It also makes trade-offs over time, across regions, or across sectors clear for policy-makers.

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Producing action plans to meet milestones

Requiring governments to prepare policy measures, developed through collaboration with experts and stakeholders, that will meet interim milestones.

Linking progress on milestone commitments to policy course corrections

Obliging governments that miss milestones to publish revised plans and policies that address these excess emissions can help governments stay on track toward their long-term targets.

Requiring monitoring and reporting

Having formal requirements for transparent reporting on government plans and progress, allowing the public to better understand and evaluate progress against commitments.

Requiring government to provide formal responses to independent advisory reports

Requiring governments to respond to progress reports and forward-looking policy recommendations from an expert advisory body ensures the relevance of independent advice and increases government accountability for reaching milestones.

Broadening the scope beyond reducing emissions

Requiring governments to look beyond reducing emissions to consider climate change adaptation or the broader social, economic, and cultural impacts of climate policy.

Integrating multiple objectives into pathways and policy

Formally extending the scope of climate accountability frameworks to consider adaptation and clean growth can lead to better, more integrated climate policy. It can help move the focus beyond GHG mitigation to broader questions of economic development and resilience.

* We define a “best practice” as a design choice or element that increases government accountability for meeting long-term targets and interim milestones, as well as for implementing the policies necessary to do so—while at the same time keeping the framework robust to changing governments, new political mandates, and shifting policy needs. Best practices are based on a review of case study jurisdictions that have implemented climate accountability frameworks, including British Columbia, France, Germany, Manitoba, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Oslo, the United Kingdom, and the U.K.’s devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.