



3.3 Responding to climate-related health challenges: national and local actions

Climate (and climate health) governance in China

China's climate governance has always operated within a hierarchical system in line with the characteristics of the Chinese political system, namely "top-level design – national strategy – sectoral and local action".¹²³ The establishment of the National Climate Change Response Coordination Group (NCCRCG) in 1998 marked the growing importance of climate change in the government's policy agenda since the country's economic reforms began in the 1980s. In 2007, China's National Climate Change Programme¹²⁴ was published, further elevating climate change to the responsibility of the highest level of the government, the State Council, and making it a key milestone in the evolution of China's climate governance. In the same year, the National Leading Group on Climate Change Response, Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction (NLGCCR) was established to improve cross-ministerial coordination in climate policy-making.¹²⁵ The NLGCCR, which is led by the premier and includes more than 30 ministers as members, serves as the State Council's advisory and coordinating body for interministerial climate action. After the

12th Five-Year Plan was introduced, a policy shift towards a new low-carbon development model gradually emerged.¹²⁶ In the first NDC submission, China pledged to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030.¹²⁷ In April 2018, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) established the Climate Change Department (CCD) to promote synergy between environmental protection and climate change policies. Since then, the CCD has been leading China's efforts to combat climate change.¹²⁸ At the same time, all related ministries have set up climate change "anchor" offices to facilitate ministry-wide climate policy coordination.

Unlike overall climate governance, climate-health governance in China remains vague and the accountability mechanism is yet to be established. Committees and government bodies designing, implementing and evaluating climate-health policies are currently scattered across different ministries. For instance, the National Institute of Environmental Health is overseen by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), while the Environmental Health Research Center of the China Academy of Environmental Planning is directed by the MEE. There are many overlaps in the duties of these two agencies and the projects they are running.