

ClimateScanner[®] Global Assessment of the Government of Guam's Actions Related to Climate Change

FLASH REPORT

December 2015 through August 2024

OPA Report No. 24-11
October 2024





Government of Guam
ClimateScanner® Global Assessment of the Government of
Guam's Actions Related to Climate Change

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

ClimateScanner® Global Assessment of the Government of Guam's Actions Related to Climate Change

OPA Report No. 24-11

ClimateScanner® Global Assessment

The Guam Office of Public Accountability (OPA) issues this flash report of the ClimateScanner® assessment of the Government of Guam's (GovGuam) actions related to climate change. Our objective was to report the results of the assessment, and the scope of the assessment is from the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015 through August 2024.

The ClimateScanner® Global Assessment is a priority project of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), currently chaired by the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) Brazil, the Federal Court of Accounts. ClimateScanner® is an initiative in which member SAIs participate in an assessment of their respective governments' actions related to climate change. As the SAI for Guam, the OPA was invited to participate in this initiative to assess GovGuam's actions towards climate change.

ClimateScanner® Framework Design

ClimateScanner®, through SAIs, will (a) determine countries' adherence to the commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), (b) assess the performance of public policies designed to achieve those commitments, and (c) assess the performance of the allocation of resources directed at climate finance action.

ClimateScanner® is a rapid review web application tool structured into four sections, including a country profile and three axes for assessment: Governance, Public Policies, and Climate Finance, each described below.

1. **Country Profile** – a descriptive section with general information about the country (such as geopolitical information and social and economic indexes) and the country's climate profile (such as net greenhouse gas emissions, emissions targets, and key vulnerable sectors).
2. **Governance Axis** – covers institutional aspects related to mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change.
3. **Public Policies Axis** – addresses mitigation and adaptation in a more specific and detailed way.
4. **Climate Finance Axis** – covers domestic climate finance, international climate finance for provider countries, international climate finance for recipient countries, and domestic and international private climate finance mechanisms.

Each axis is divided into categories that are divided into components. Components are assessed by considering two to four items.

Disclosure

We recognize Guam's political status as an unincorporated territory of the United States of America and that Guam is listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory under Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations. Our participation in this initiative is as a member SAI and is intended to assess GovGuam's climate change commitments to the people of Guam with guidance from ClimateScanner® and SAI Brazil. Most items where references to "country" or "national government" were assessed based on GovGuam's actions to the greatest extent possible. Some items required reference to evidence of United States governmental action.

Assessment Criteria

The general assessment criteria rating for each item is based on a four-tier scale, according to GovGuam’s level of implementation. “Implementation” is understood to be the presence or not of certain features related to each item. For most items, the focus is on whether mechanisms, systems, or policies exist instead of evaluating effectiveness and the results achieved through these mechanisms, structures, and policies. (Evaluating effectiveness is appropriate when conducting a formal audit.)

For each item with a rating higher than “no implementation,” ClimateScanner® required sources of evidence (i.e., audits, primary research, official information from the government, academic research, non-governmental sources, etc.) to be uploaded or referenced by a hyperlink.

No implementation: no relevant aspects of the item are present.

Early implementation: few relevant aspects of the item are present, but there is considerable room for improvement.

Intermediate implementation: many aspects of the item are present, but there is still room for improvement.

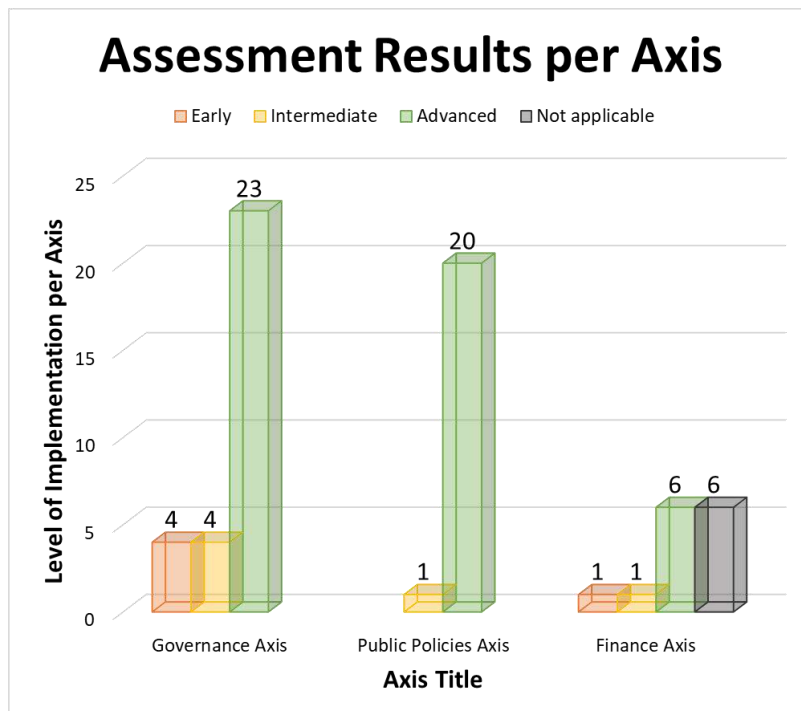
Advanced implementation: all or nearly all relevant aspects of the item are present.

Not applicable: used when the item does not make sense according to the country’s circumstances or characteristics.

Not assessed: used when the SAI does not have the mandate to assess the item or when the SAI is not able to collect the information needed.

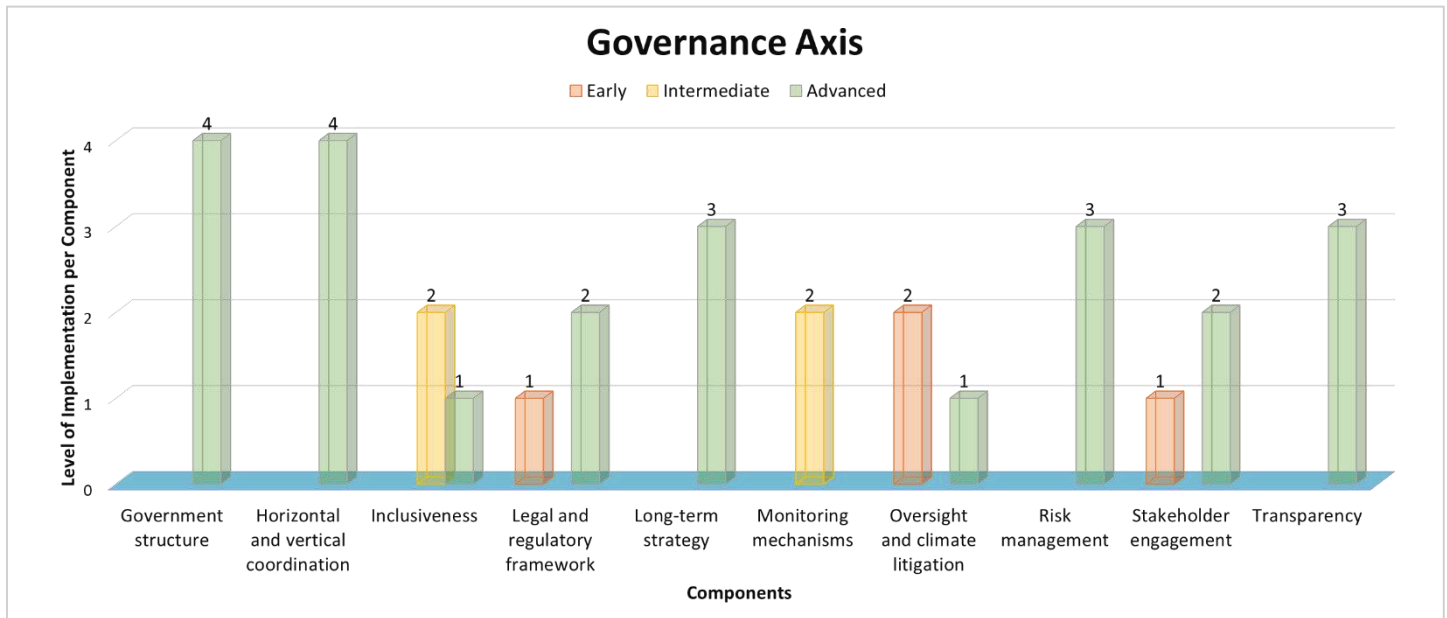
Government of Guam ClimateScanner® Assessment Results

There were 66 items for assessment. Results show that of the 66 items, GovGuam was rated at *Advanced Implementation* for 49 items, *Intermediate Implementation* for six items, and *Early Implementation* for five items. Six items were *not applicable* to GovGuam (explained in the Finance Axis section of this report).



Governance Axis

The Governance Axis covers national government structures and legislation, oversight, planning, coordination, monitoring, transparency, and engagement with different actors, assessing institutionalization, strategy, coordination, and accountability. There were 31 items for assessment—of the 31 items, 23 were rated at *Advanced Implementation*, four at *Intermediate Implementation*, and four at *Early Implementation*.

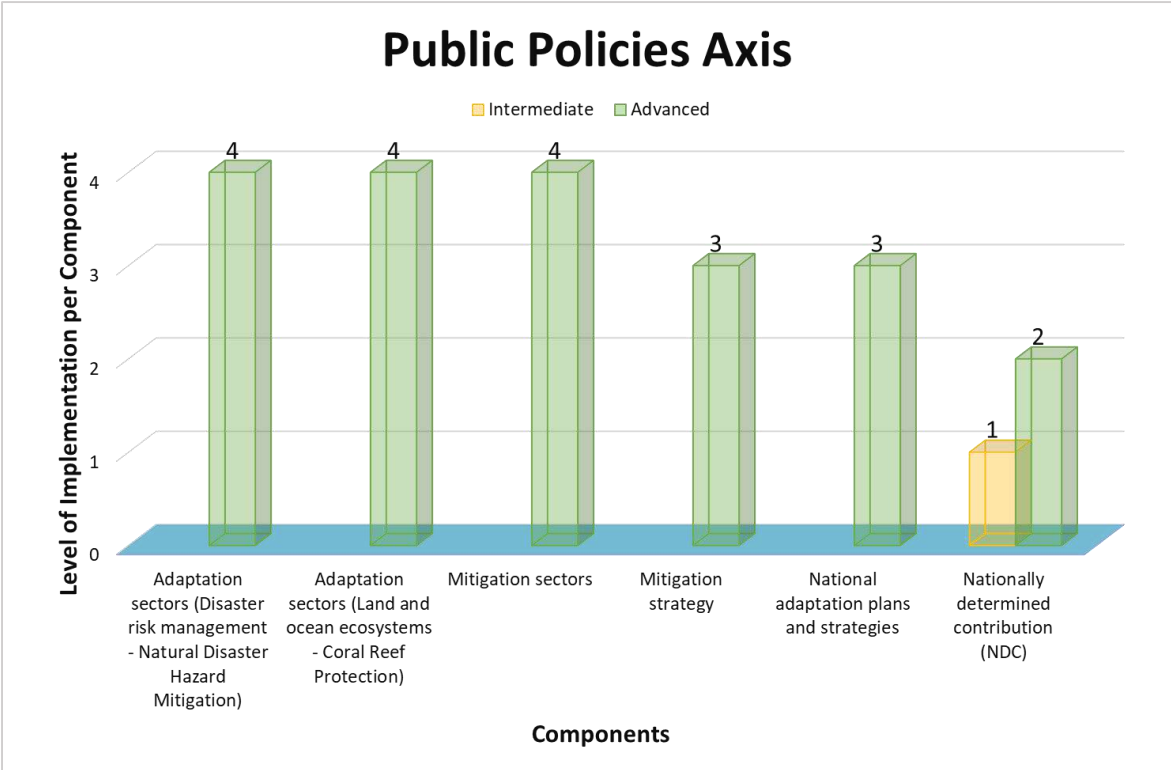


- Governance Axis > Institutionalization > Legal and regulatory framework > Existence of legislation framework.** This item has a binary assessment to determine if there is a national law on climate change or if the national government has developed a bill and is trying to pass this bill. There is no evidence of an overarching law or a legal or regulatory framework that was approved, and there is no pending legislation for such law or legal or regulatory framework on climate change. GovGuam, however, has committed to the U.S. Climate Alliance, the Micronesia Challenge, and the Local2030 Islands Network. Each of these coalitions includes member countries that are committed to nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and other obligations to the Paris Agreement.
- Governance Axis > Coordination > Stakeholder engagement > dynamic of interaction.** This item assesses if participation mechanisms are structured to allow relevant actors to interact regularly with the national body involved in climate action and if the national body meets regularly to discuss relevant issues related to the design and implementation of climate change policies, plans, or activities; if the national body has a clear decision-making process; and if the mechanisms have provisions to take into consideration the perspectives expressed by these actors. There is at least one body – the Guam Green Growth Working Group – that meets regularly to discuss relevant issues to the design and implementation of climate change policies, plans, or activities for Guam’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is no evidence to show that other bodies meet the criteria stated above.

- Governance Axis > Accountability > Oversight and climate litigation > Audit institutions.**
 This item assesses if the SAI has, in the last five years, conducted or is currently conducting at least one audit that has climate change as its primary focus. There is no evidence that SAI Guam (OPA) has conducted an audit that has climate change as its primary focus, but the OPA Annual Work Plan for Calendar Year 2024 includes a performance audit of the Invasive Species Fund.
- Governance Axis > Accountability > Oversight and climate litigation > Climate litigation.**
 This item assesses if judicial and quasi-judicial bodies are considering and adjudicating claims related to climate change. At least one complaint has been filed for judicial consideration or adjudication for protection of endangered species from the construction and operation of a United States Marine Corps military base, seeking to hold the United States Navy accountable for mitigating harms to Guam’s endangered species from clearing hundreds of acres of land.

Public Policies Axis

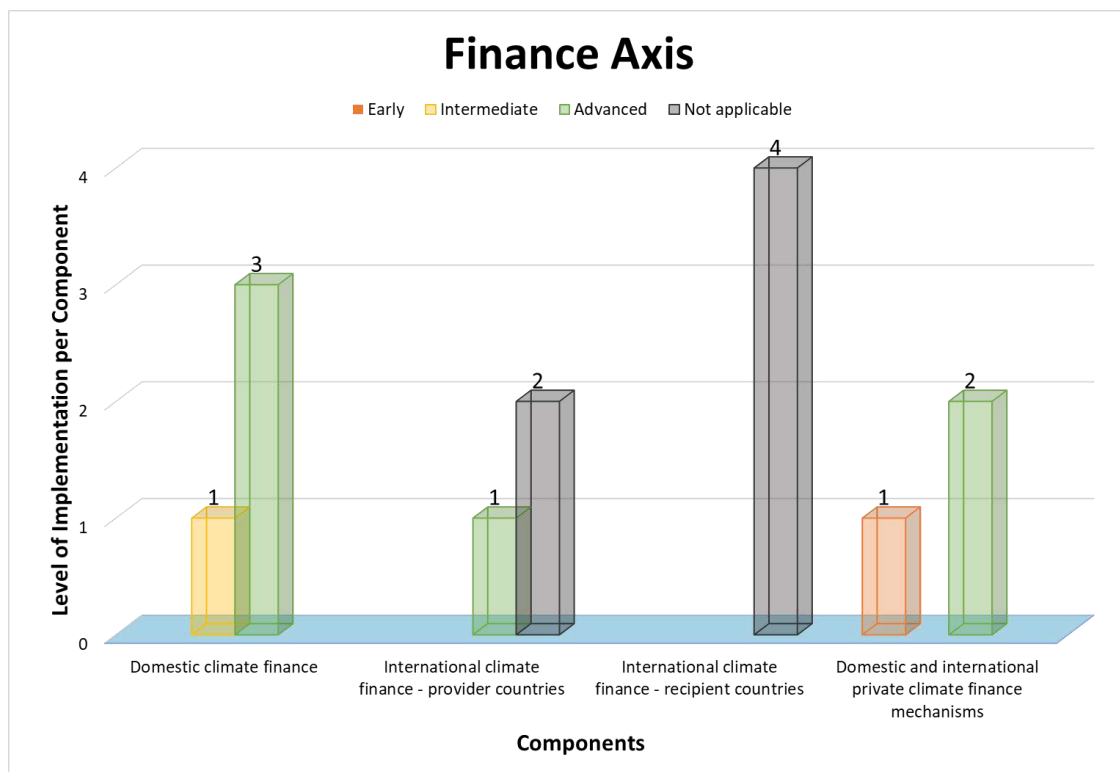
The Public Policies Axis assesses the implementation of public policies for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, taking adaptation measures in response to new climate conditions, and assesses factors such as established international commitments and overall strategies for mitigation and adaptation. There were 21 items for assessment—of the 21 items, 20 were rated at *Advanced Implementation*, and one was rated at *Intermediate Implementation*.



Finance Axis

The Finance Axis addresses local, national, or transnational financing drawn from public, private, and alternative sources of financing to support mitigation and adaptation actions to address climate change as defined by the UNFCCC. There were 14 items for assessment — of the 14 items, one was rated at *Early Implementation*, one at *Intermediate Implementation*, six at *Advanced Implementation*, and six were not applicable to GovGuam.

The items that were not applicable to GovGuam were relative to components assessing international climate finance as a provider country and international climate finance as a recipient country.



- *Finance Axis > Public Climate Finance > International climate finance – provider countries.* This component assesses how the national government of a provider country is managing the resources assigned to international climate finance, including direct financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity building. For the purposes of ClimateScanner®, provider countries are the countries included in Annex II of the UNFCCC that shall provide financial resources to assist developing countries to achieve their climate objectives, as mentioned in the Paris Agreement.

Under this component, only one exception was considered for the item, *resources allocated and disbursed*. Although Guam is not a provider country, we rated GovGuam with *Advanced Implementation* for this item as a result of GovGuam’s allocation of in-kind resources towards climate-related commitments to the Micronesia Challenge, such as staff time, travel, and office equipment.

- *Finance Axis > Public Climate Finance > International climate finance – recipient countries.* This component assesses how well the national government of a recipient country is prepared to identify, mobilize, and manage international resources that are available for climate mitigation and adaptation projects. For the purposes of ClimateScanner[®], recipient countries are developing countries not included in Annex II of the UNFCCC (the United States of America is a party under Annex I).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This is the first-ever assessment of GovGuam’s action for climate change. These results will be consolidated with results from other participating member SAIs and presented to the Conference of Parties 29 at the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in November 2024.

While we commend GovGuam for receiving *Advanced Implementation* for most of the items (governance, public policies, and finance) of the ClimateScanner[®], we caution that the assessment did not evaluate for the effectiveness of GovGuam’s climate change actions. A more comprehensive review is needed to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of GovGuam’s climate change actions and will be considered in future audit work plans.

Although this is not a full audit, it is OPA’s observation that improvements can be made on the transparency of GovGuam’s efforts in addressing climate change. We recommend for GovGuam to establish an overarching law or a legal or regulatory framework on climate change that would include reporting requirements and the centralization of GovGuam’s climate change action to increase public awareness, stakeholder engagement, and monitor progress.

GovGuam officials generally agreed with our conclusion and recommendation. They welcome a full performance audit on GovGuam’s effectiveness in addressing climate change action be conducted by OPA. An environmental performance audit will be considered as part of the Annual Audit Work Plan.

GOVERNMENT OF GUAM

ClimateScanner® Global Assessment of the Government of Guam's Actions Related to Climate Change

Report No. 24-11, October 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Key contributions to this report were made by:

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Jerrick J.J.G. Hernandez MA, CGFM, CFE, CICA, CGAP – Audit Supervisor

Benjamin J.F. Cruz, Public Auditor of Guam

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure public trust and good governance in the Government of Guam, we conduct audits and administer procurement appeals with objectivity, professionalism and accountability.

VISION

The Government of Guam is a model for good governance with OPA leading by example as a model robust audit office.

CORE VALUES

Objective

To have an independent and impartial mind.

Professional

To adhere to ethical and professional standards.

Accountable

To be responsible and transparent in our actions.

REPORTING FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

- Call our HOTLINE at 47AUDIT(472.8348)
- Visit our website at www.opaguam.org
- Call our office at 475.0390
- Fax our office at 472.7951
- Or visit us at Suite 401 DNA Building in Hagåtña

All information will be held in strict confidence.



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