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2.1 Background

Climate change will inevitably continue in the next few decades. The Fifth Assessment Reports (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) proposed that global mean temperature, relative to preindustrial, is likely to increase by 1.5–4.0 °C by the end of the twenty-first century, accompanied with changes in rainfall patterns and an increase in climate variability (IPCC 2013). Accordingly, extreme climate events, especially extreme high temperature and precipitation, have been showing an increasing trend (He et al. 2015; IPCC 2013; Dong et al. 2015). Natural disasters such as drought and flood caused by climate change are now occurring more frequently and widely, leading to the instability of eco-environment system and restricting the socioeconomic development (Min et al. 2011).

China is one of the countries severely affected by climate change and meteorological disasters. Losses of meteorological disasters is about 70% of those caused by natural

disasters, and have led to about 3–6% of Gross National Product (GNP) of direct economic loss in China (Yin et al. 2016). It is thus necessary to analyze the general features of future climate change.

The primary goal of this chapter was to present the up-to-date projected changes of climate variables, including the daily maximum, minimum, and average temperature and annual precipitation across China. In addition, we provided maps of the temperature and precipitation geographical distributions and their changing features in the twenty-first century.

2.2 Data and Method

Future climate data across China are originated from five Global Climate Models (GFDL-ESM2M, HadGEM2-ES, IPSL-CM5A-LR, MIROC-ESM-CHEM, and NorESM1-M). The model outputs were bias-corrected and downscaled to a grid with $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$ resolution by the Inter-Sectoral Impact Model Intercomparison Project (ISI-MIP) (Stefan et al. 2011; Hempel et al. 2013; Piani et al. 2010; Warszawski et al. 2014). All representative concentration pathways (RCPs), namely RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5, representing the low, middle, and high pathways for energy and industry CO₂ emissions were adopted.

To investigate the multi-decadal variability and trends of climate changes, consecutive 30-year periods throughout the twenty-first century were adopted with 1981–2010 period as baseline. Values of climate variable for each grid in 2011–2040, 2041–2070, and 2071–2100, which were the mean of five climate model outputs, were compared with those of baseline. Temperature change was evaluated by its absolute variations in daily rate and precipitation was compared with relative precipitation change in yearly rate. The standard deviation of simulated changes in climate variables from the five general circulation models (GCMs) was calculated to quantify inter-model variability (Lobell et al. 2007).

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2.3 Results

2.3.1 Climate Change

(1) Daily maximum temperature

The daily maximum temperature is increasing across China in future periods under all RCPs scenarios. Temperature increase is greater in the areas with higher latitude or altitude, and changes in the daily maximum temperature are higher in inland regions than that of coastal areas. The area with highest increase of maximum temperature distributes near the Tibetan Plateau within ranges of 1.8–2.5, 1.8–4.0, 1.4–5.0, and 1.8–6.9 °C under RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5 scenarios, respectively.

The slightest increase in daily maximum temperature is for 2011–2040, while the largest increase is for 2071–2100 under RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5 scenarios. The largest increase in temperature under RCP2.6 scenario occurs in 2041–2070.

(2) Daily minimum and mean temperatures

The daily minimum and mean temperatures change similarly in future periods under all RCPs with a greater increase in areas located in higher latitude or altitude, as well as inland areas far away from coastline. The northern Xinjiang and Heilongjiang provinces are the areas with the highest change in daily minimum and mean temperatures. Increase of the daily minimum temperature is 1.8–2.5, 1.8–4.0, 1.4–5.0, and 1.4–6.8 °C and increase of the daily mean temperature is 2.0–3.0, 2.0–4.0, 1.2–5.0, and 1.7–6.6 °C under RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5 scenarios, respectively.

The daily minimum and mean temperatures rise by the smallest amount in 2011–2040, and the largest amount in 2071–2100 under RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5 scenarios. The highest change in daily minimum and mean temperatures occurs in 2041–2070 under RCP2.6 scenario.

(3) Annual precipitation

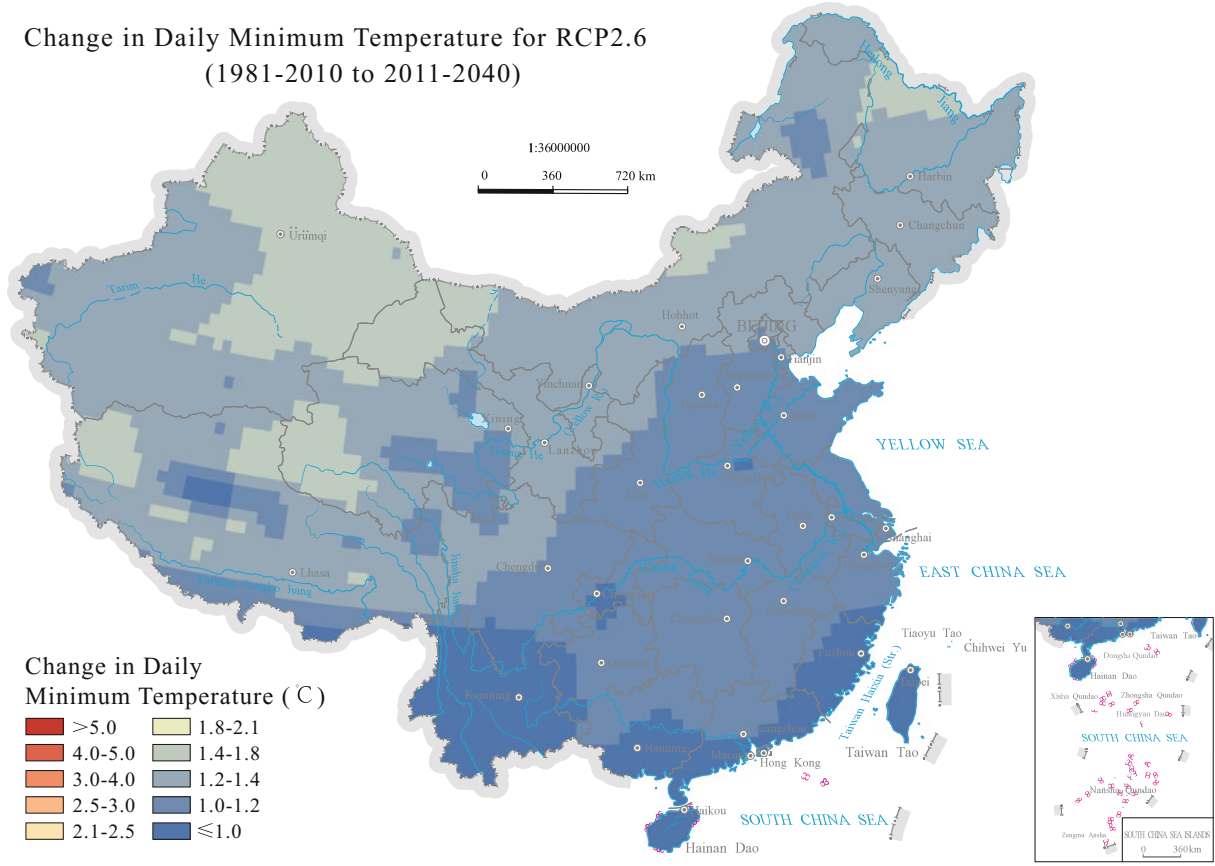
The annual precipitation exhibits a general increasing trend across China during future periods under all RCPs scenarios. Precipitation rising tends to be greater in areas having higher latitude or altitude or areas close to the coastline. The area with highest change in annual precipitation distributes near the Tibetan Plateau, the Qaidam Basin, and northern Gansu province. Under most of the RCP scenarios, minimal increase of annual precipitation is for 2011–2040 and maximal increase is for 2071–2100.

2.3.2 Intermodel Spread in Climate Changes

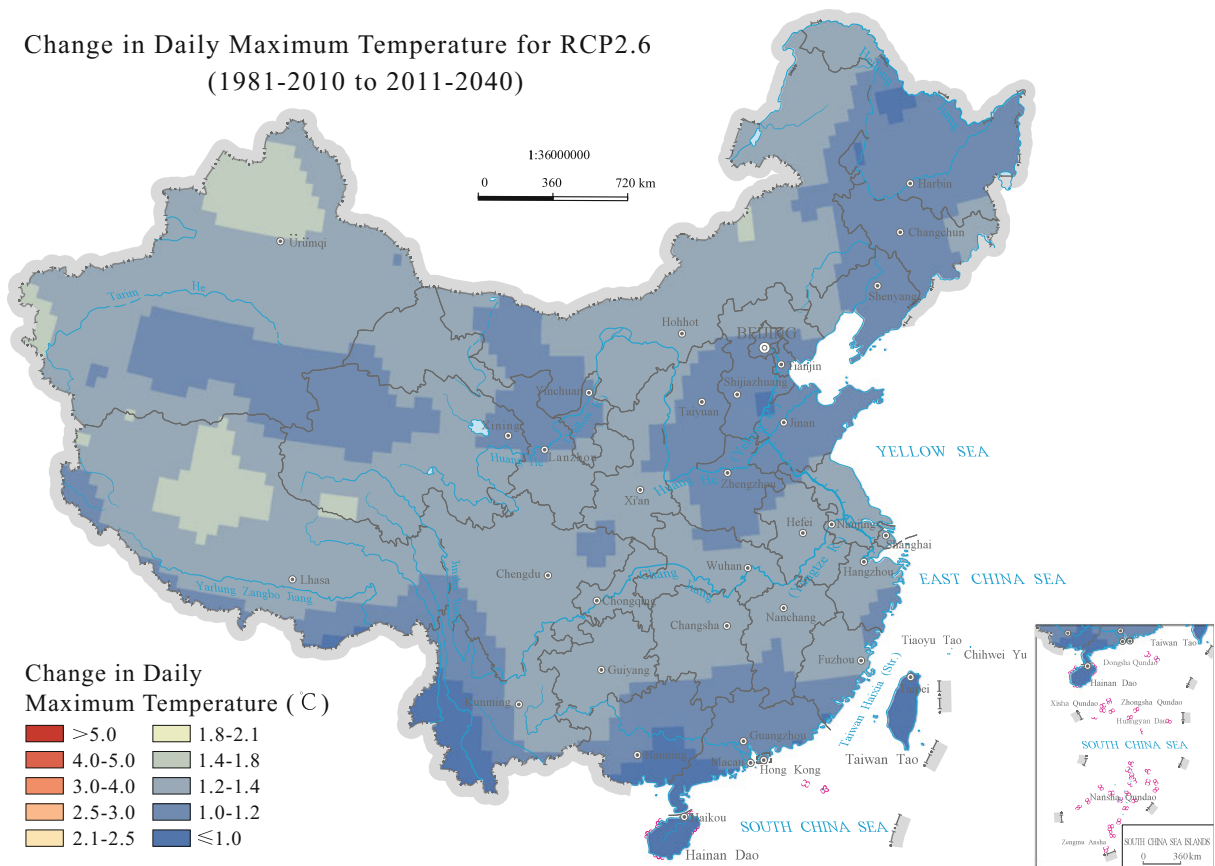
The standard deviations of climate variables in 2071–2100 under RCP8.5 scenarios were calculated. The spread arising from climate models for daily temperatures (maximum, minimum, and mean temperature) was generally less than 20%, indicating that their values generated from multiple climate models were in good consistency. However, the spread for annual precipitation across China showed greater regionally differences, with relative changes being less than 20% for most regions but more than 20% for eastern China.

2.4 Maps

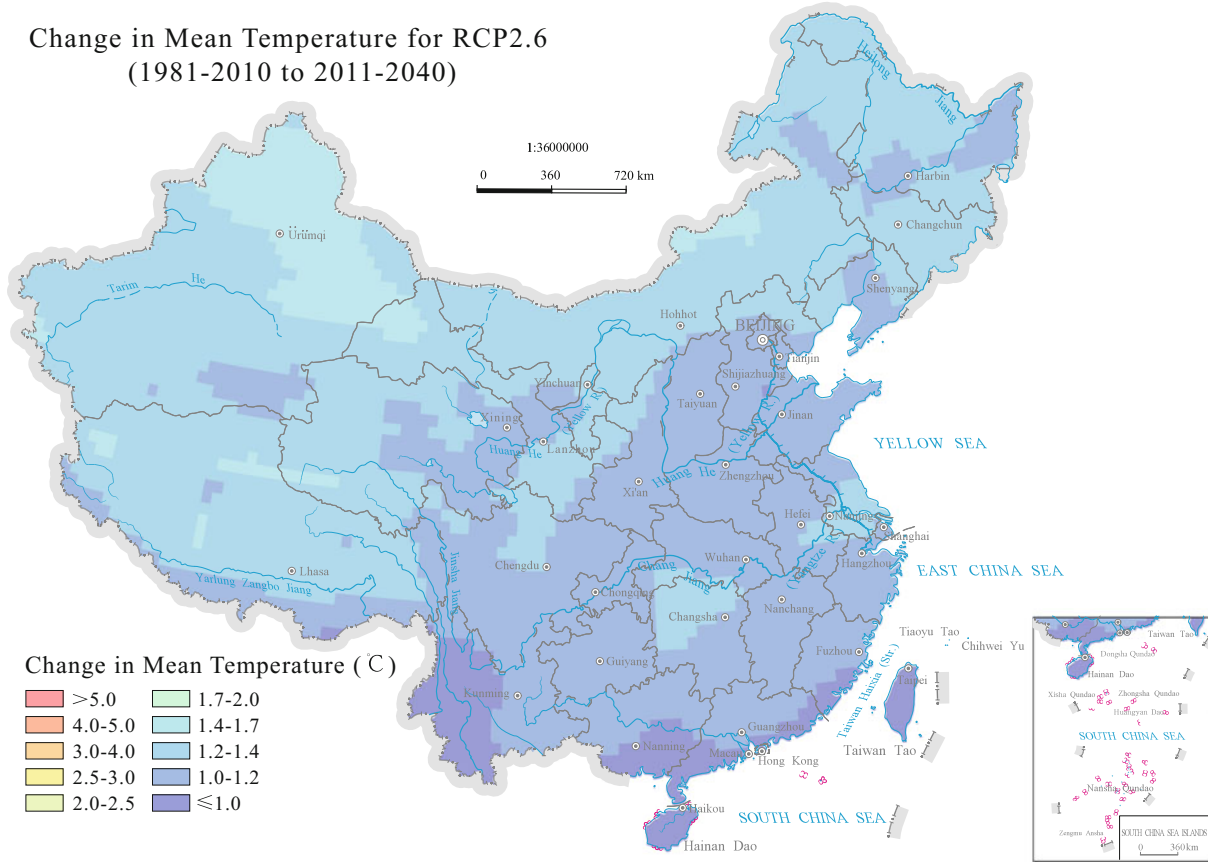
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP2.6
(1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



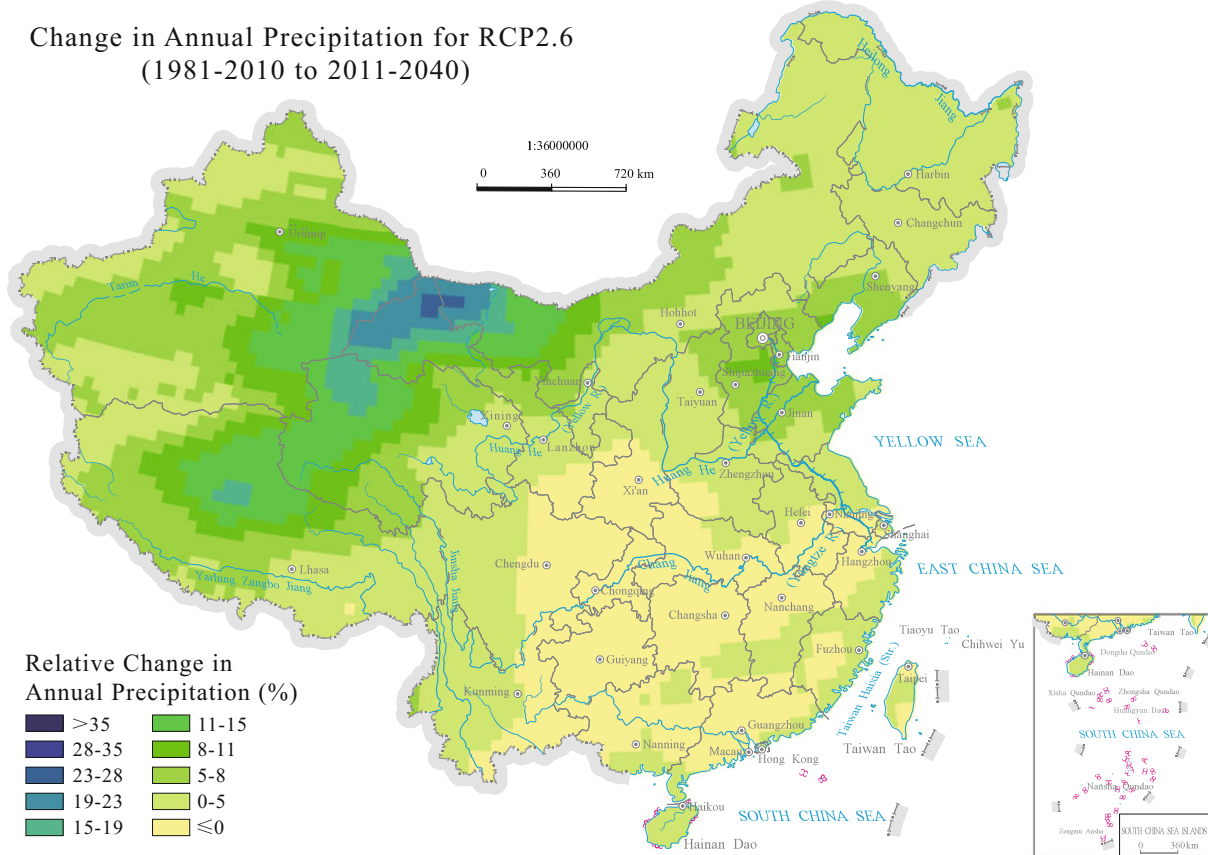
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP2.6
(1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



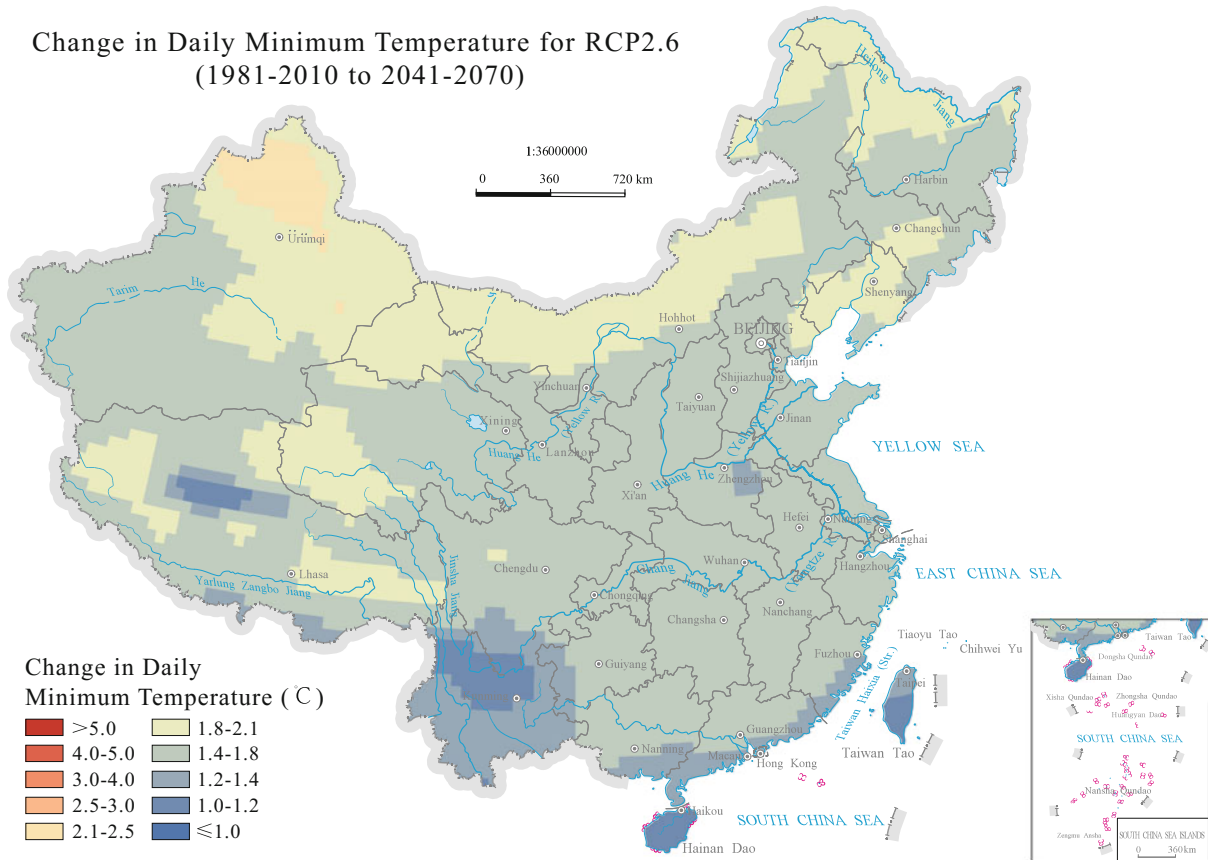
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



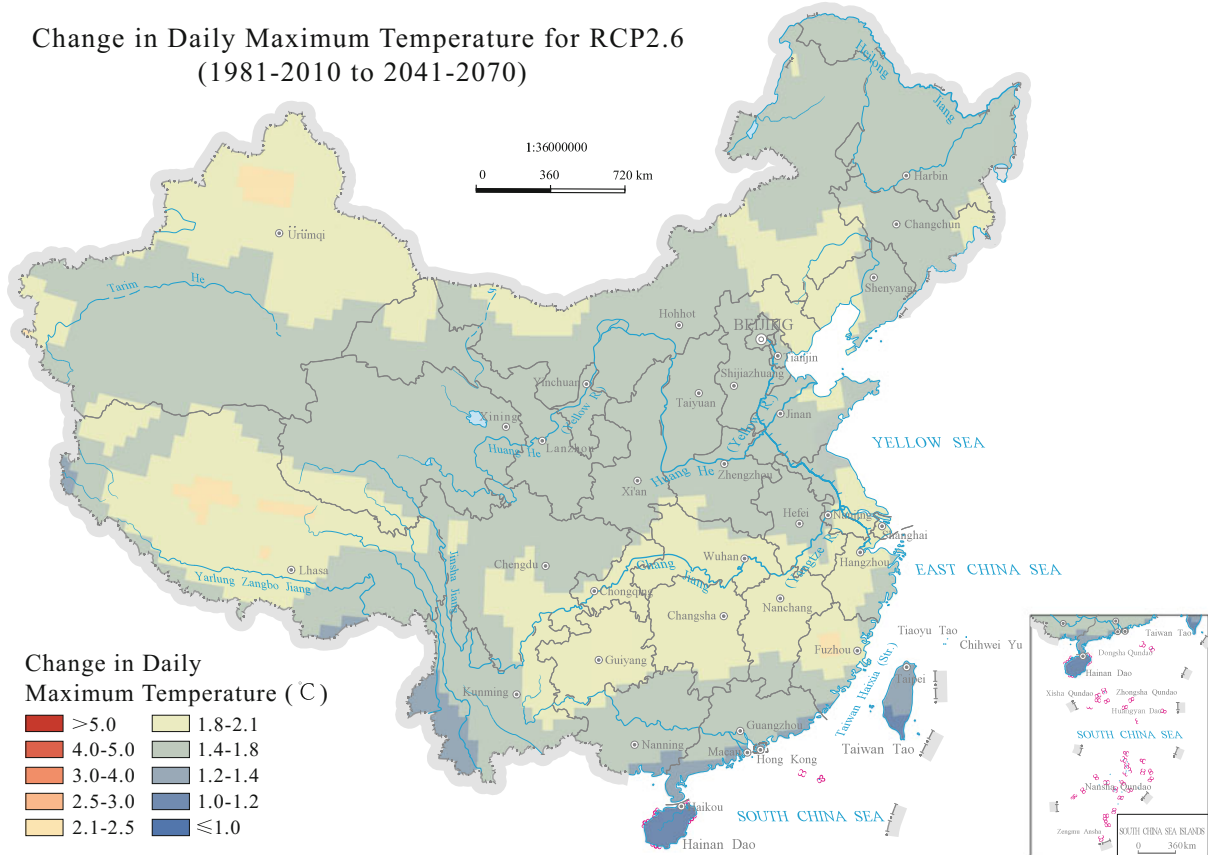
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



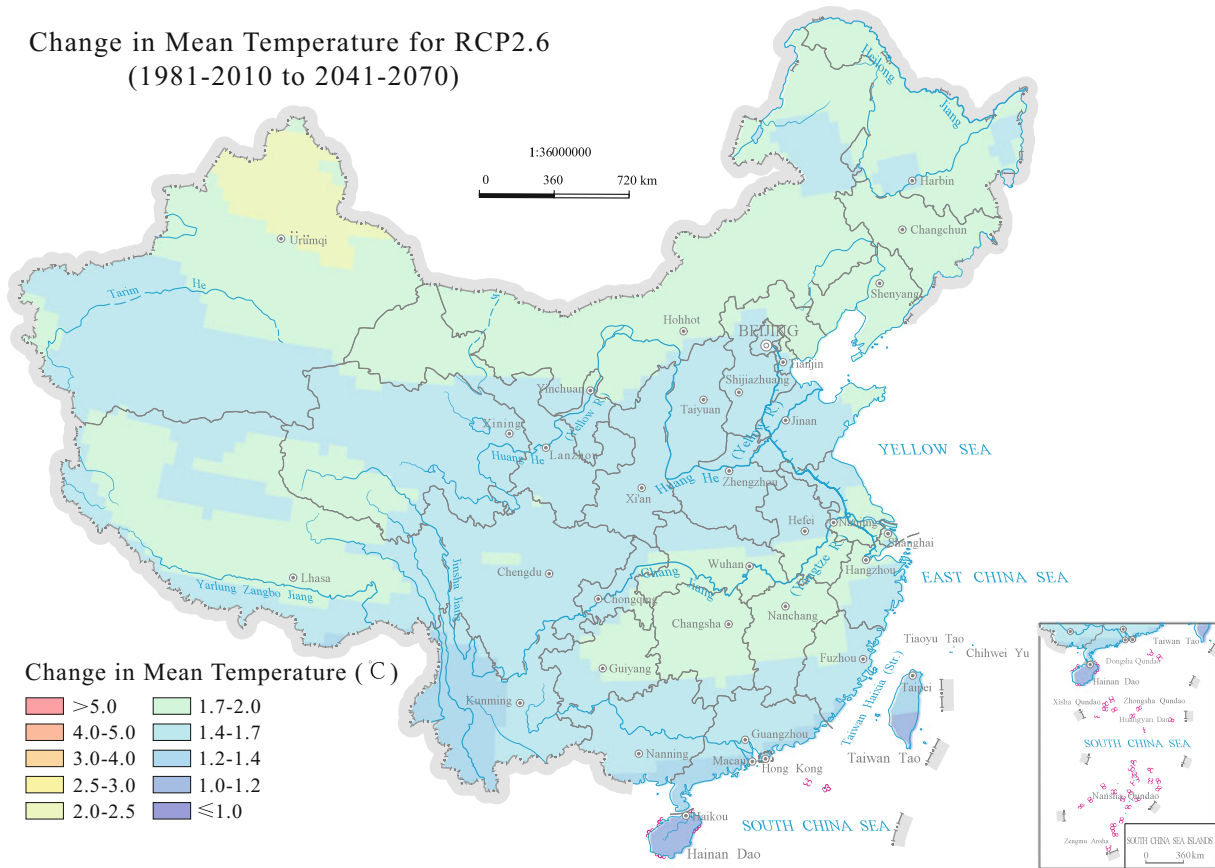
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



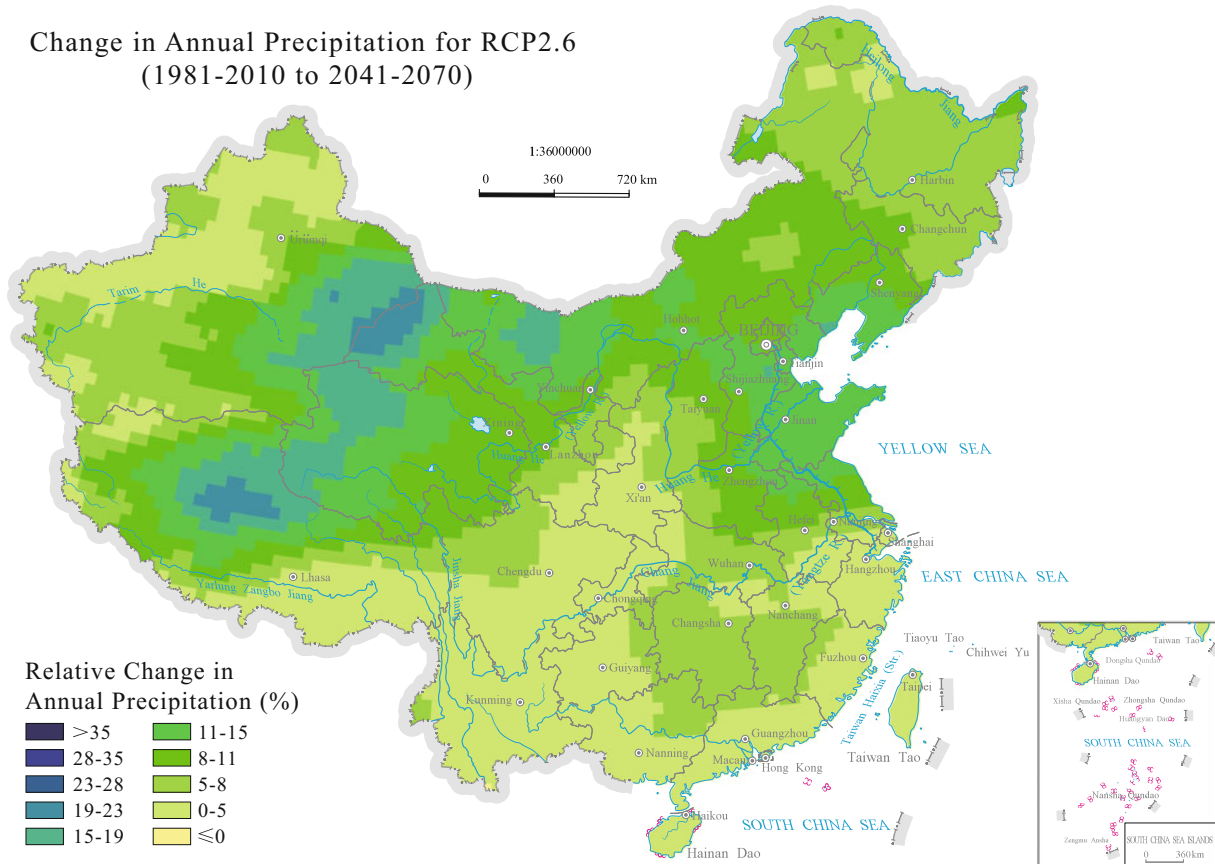
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



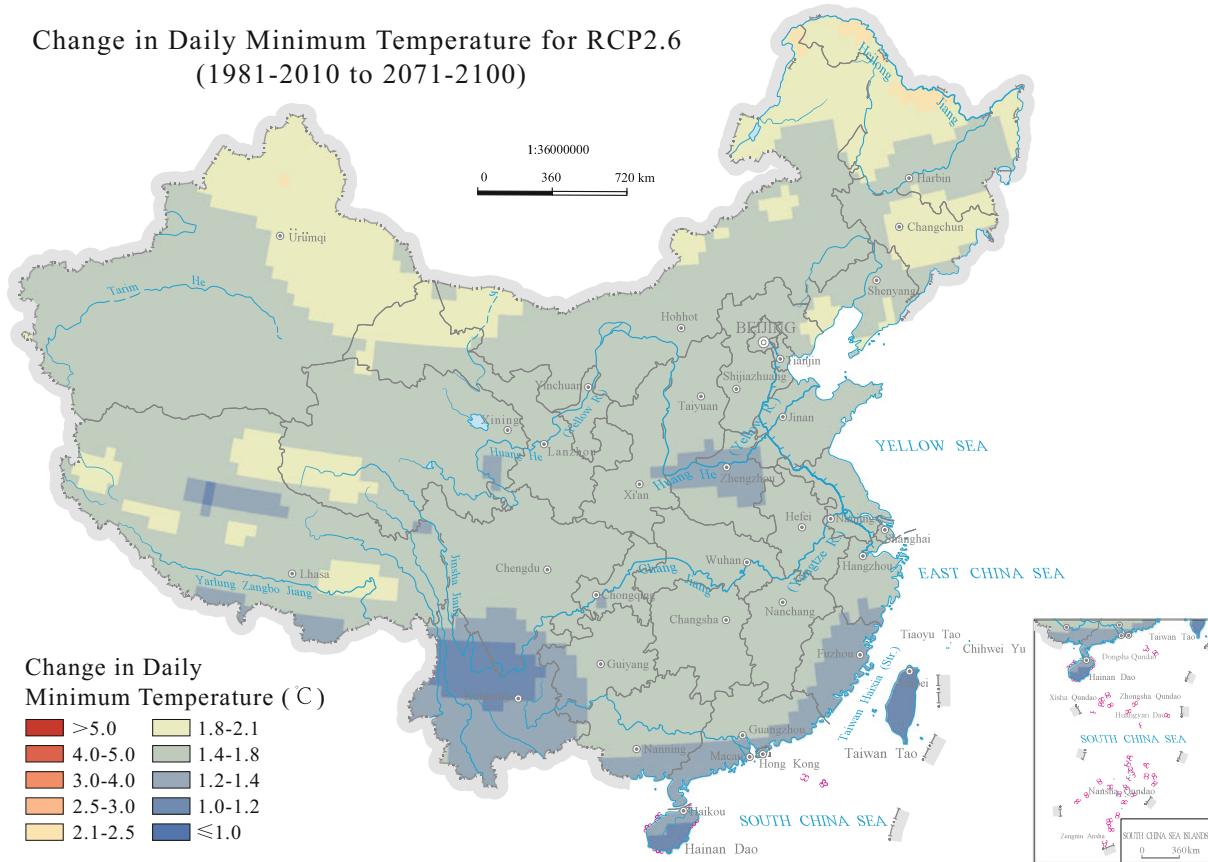
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



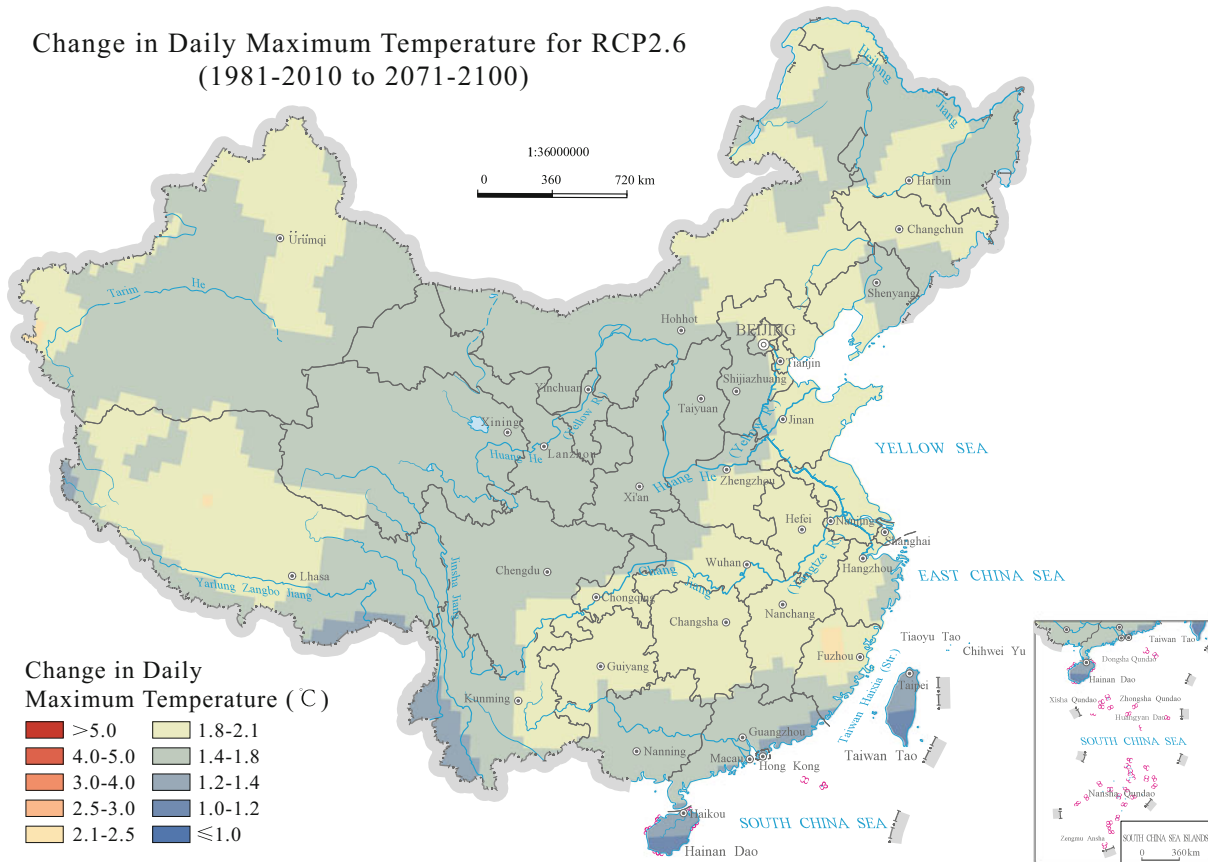
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



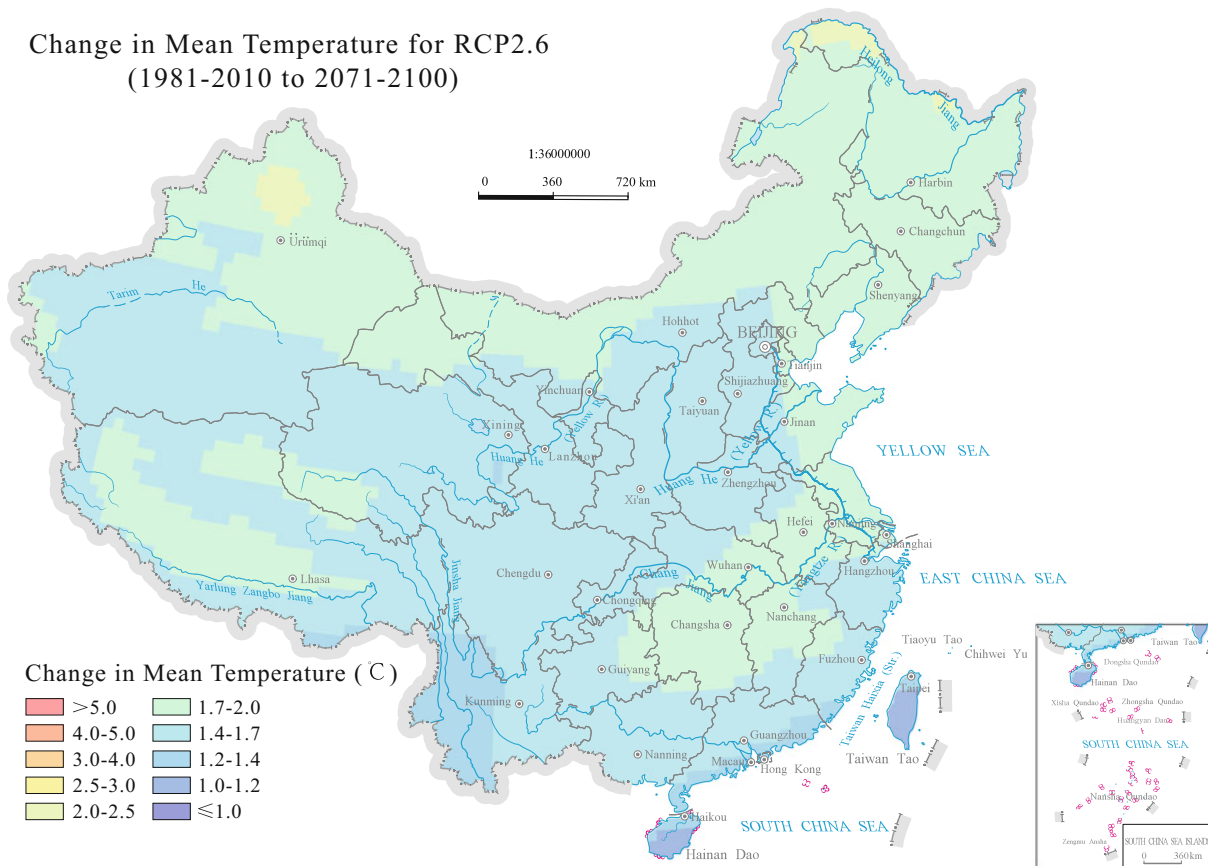
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP2.6 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



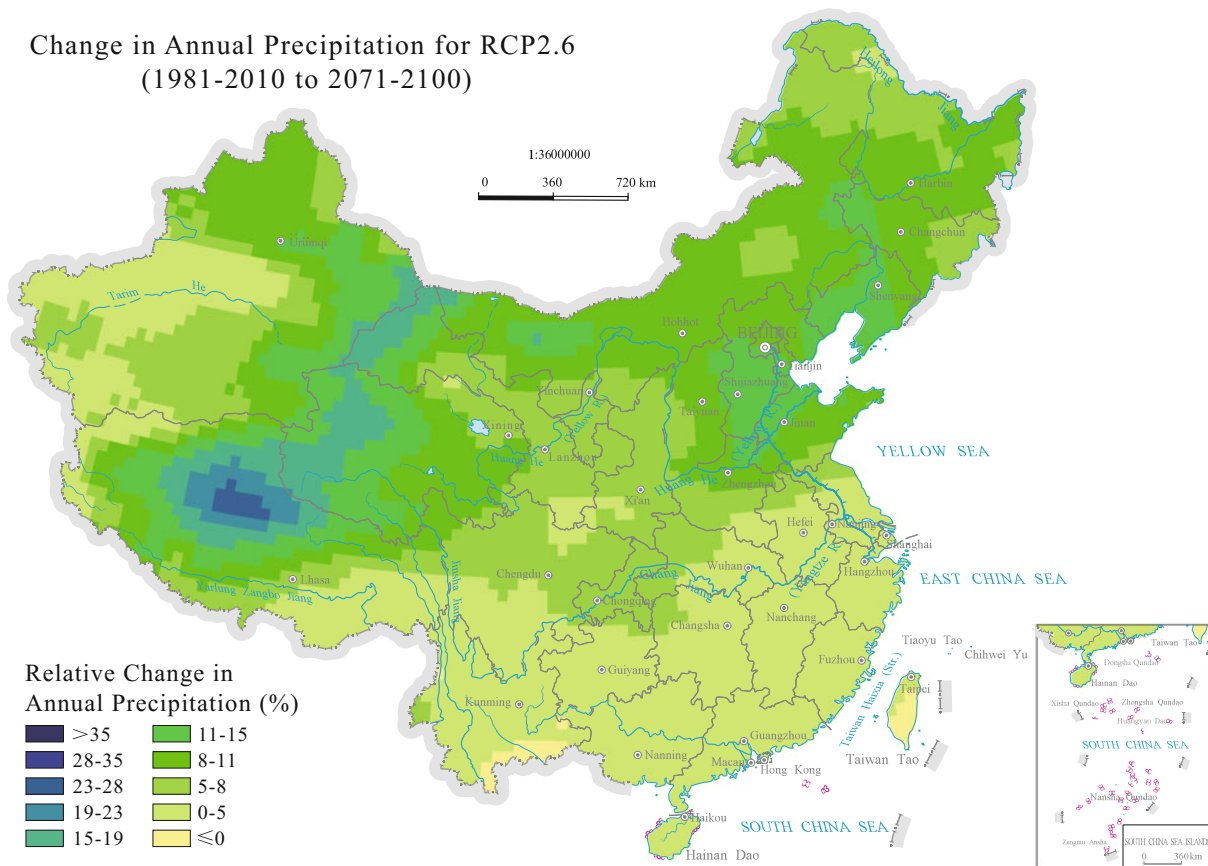
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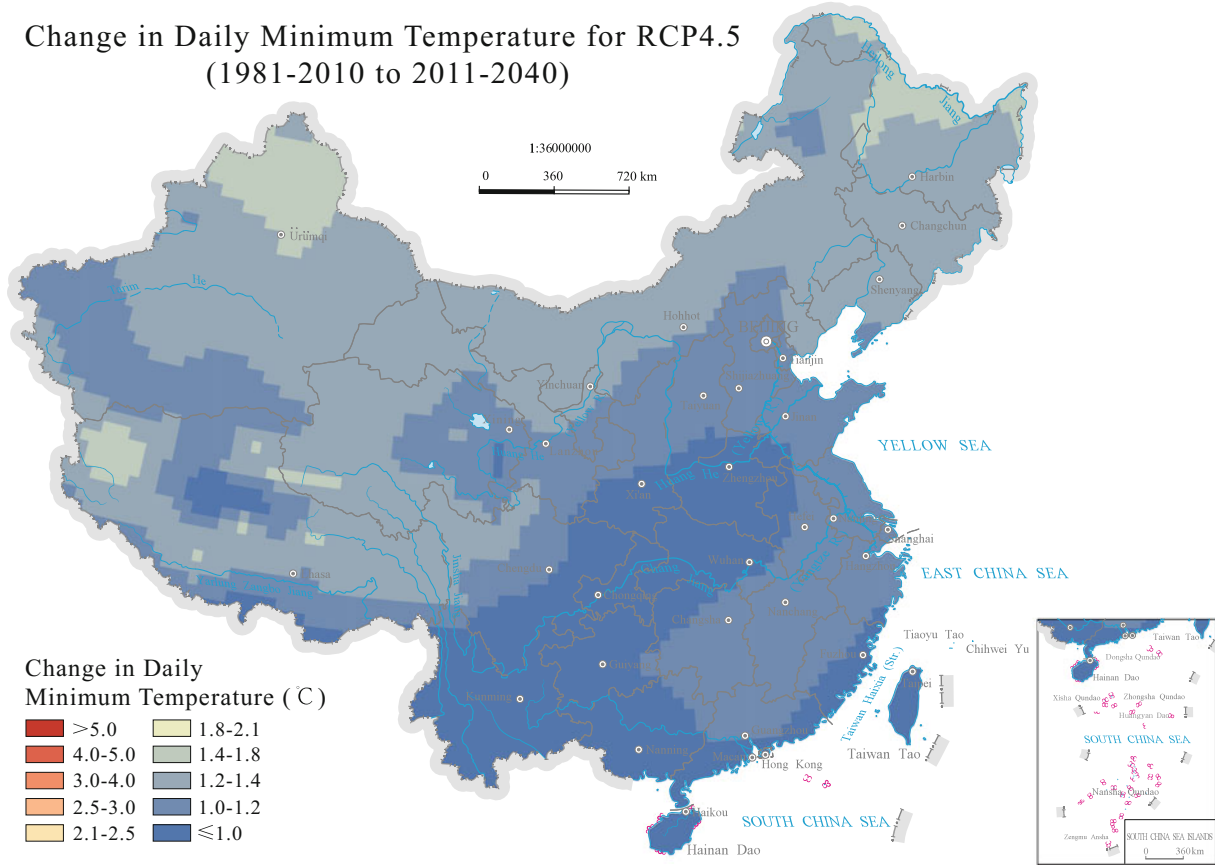
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP2.6
(1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



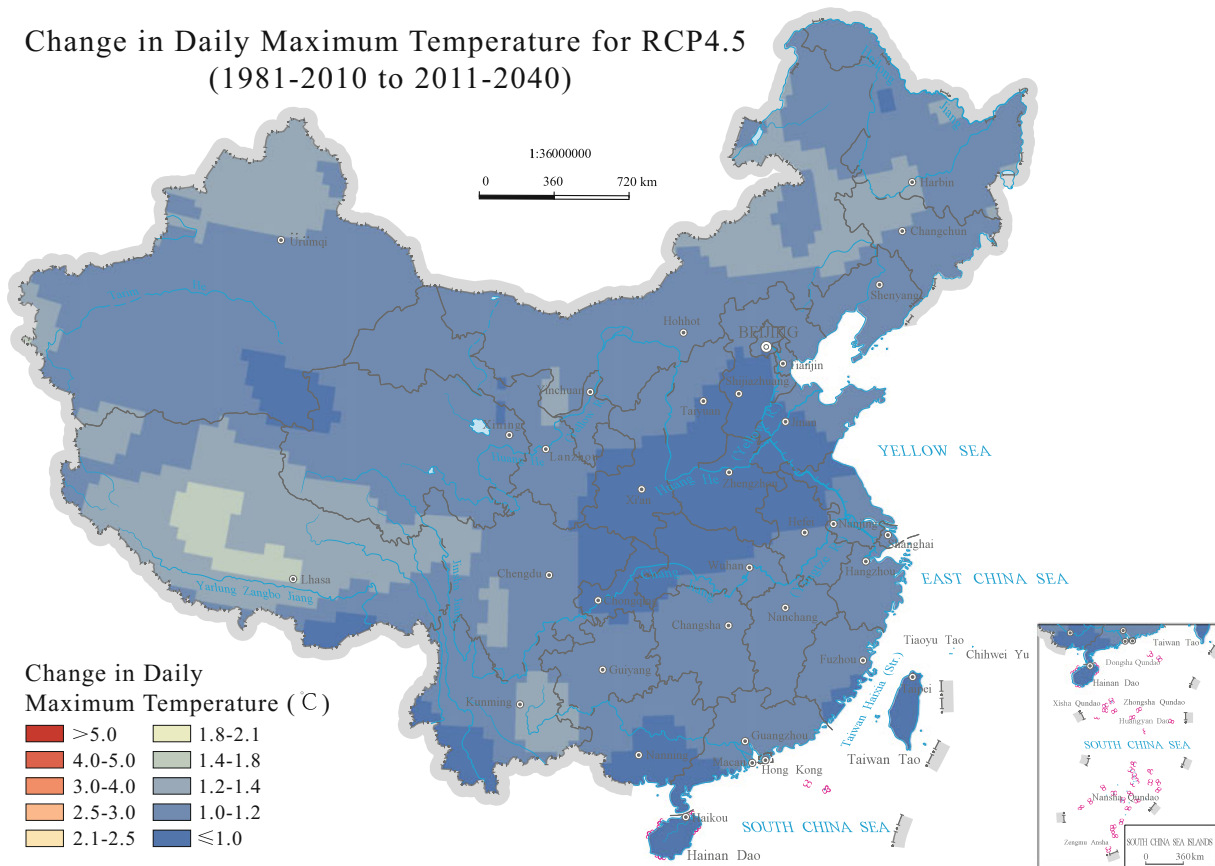
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP2.6
(1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



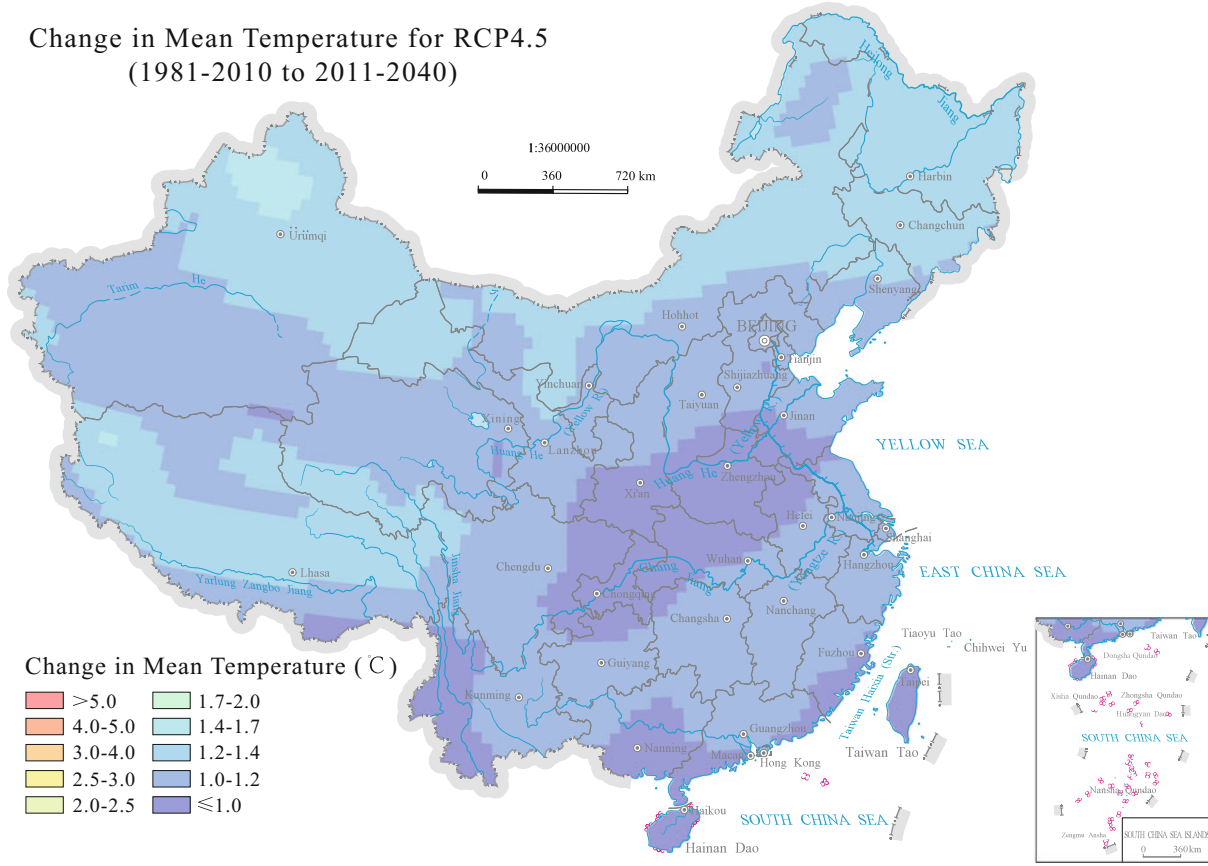
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



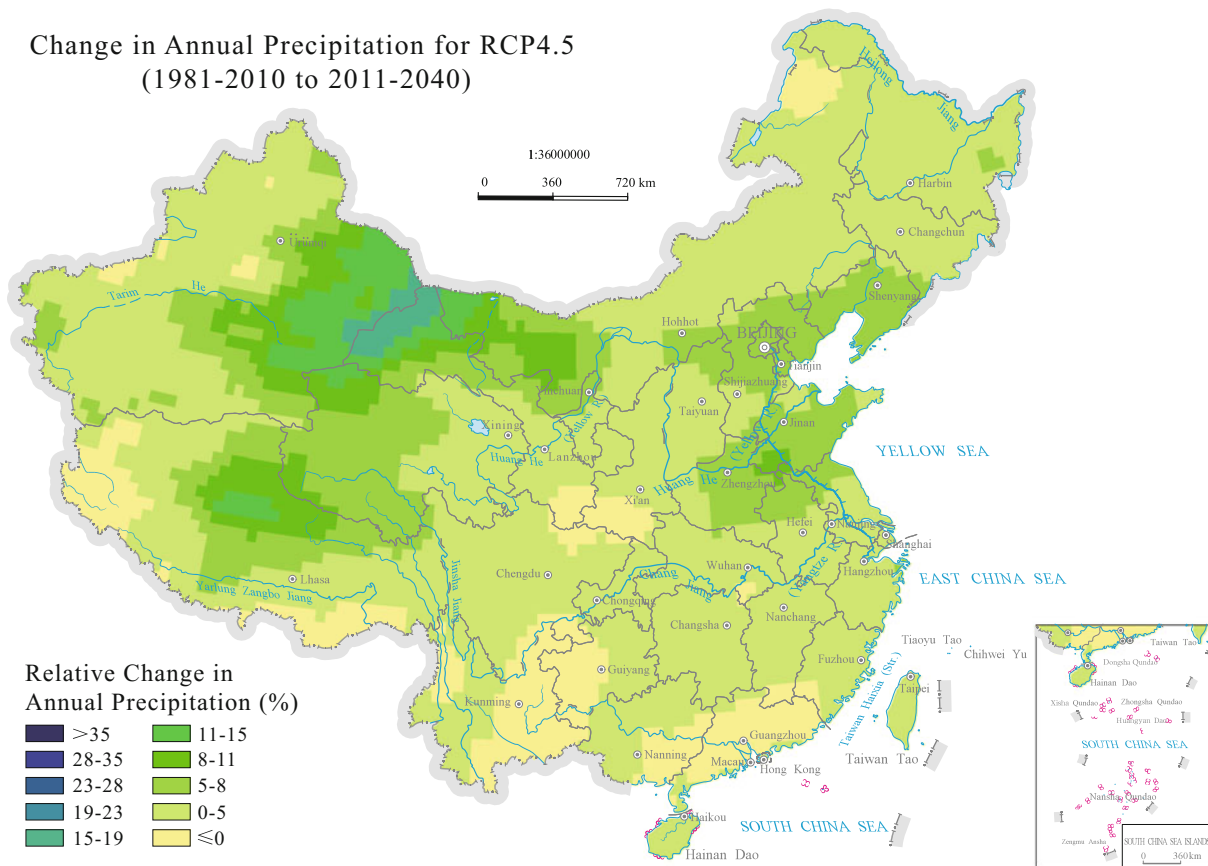
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



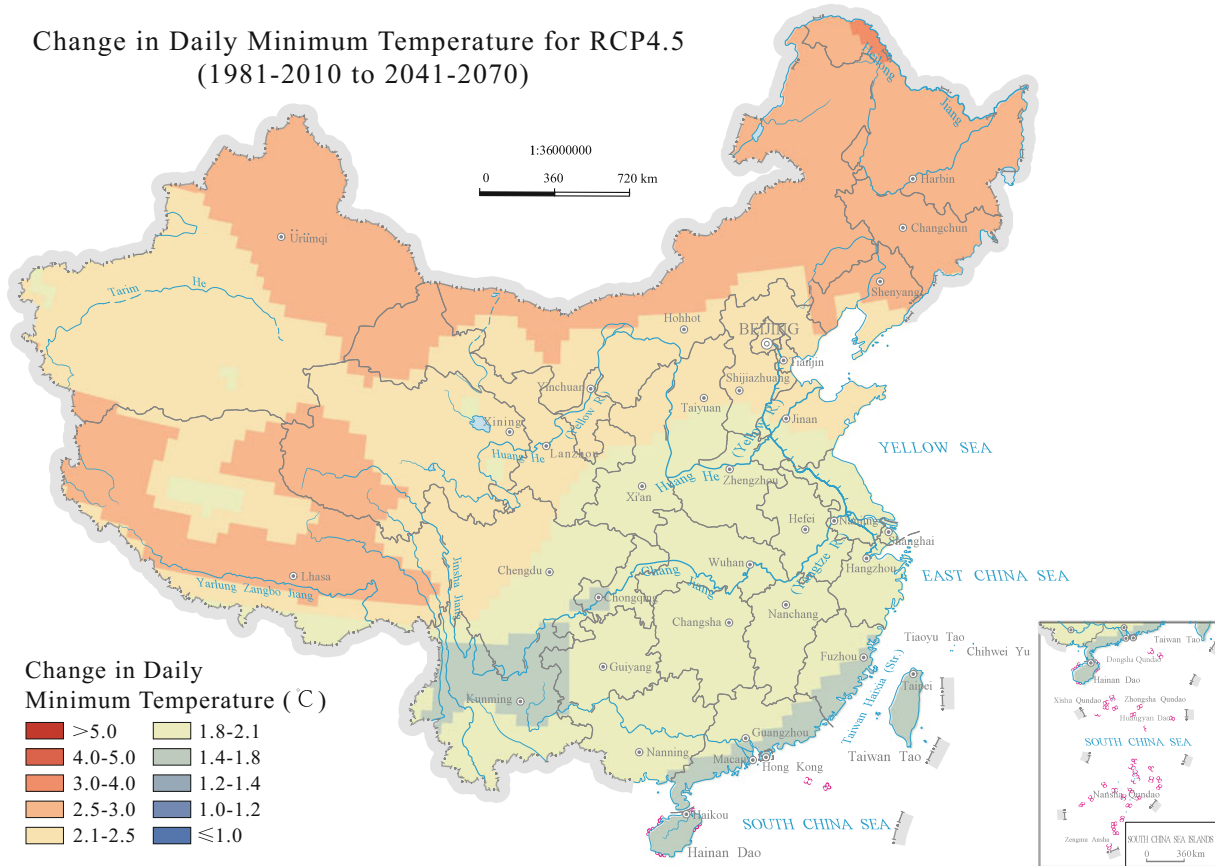
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP4.5
(1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



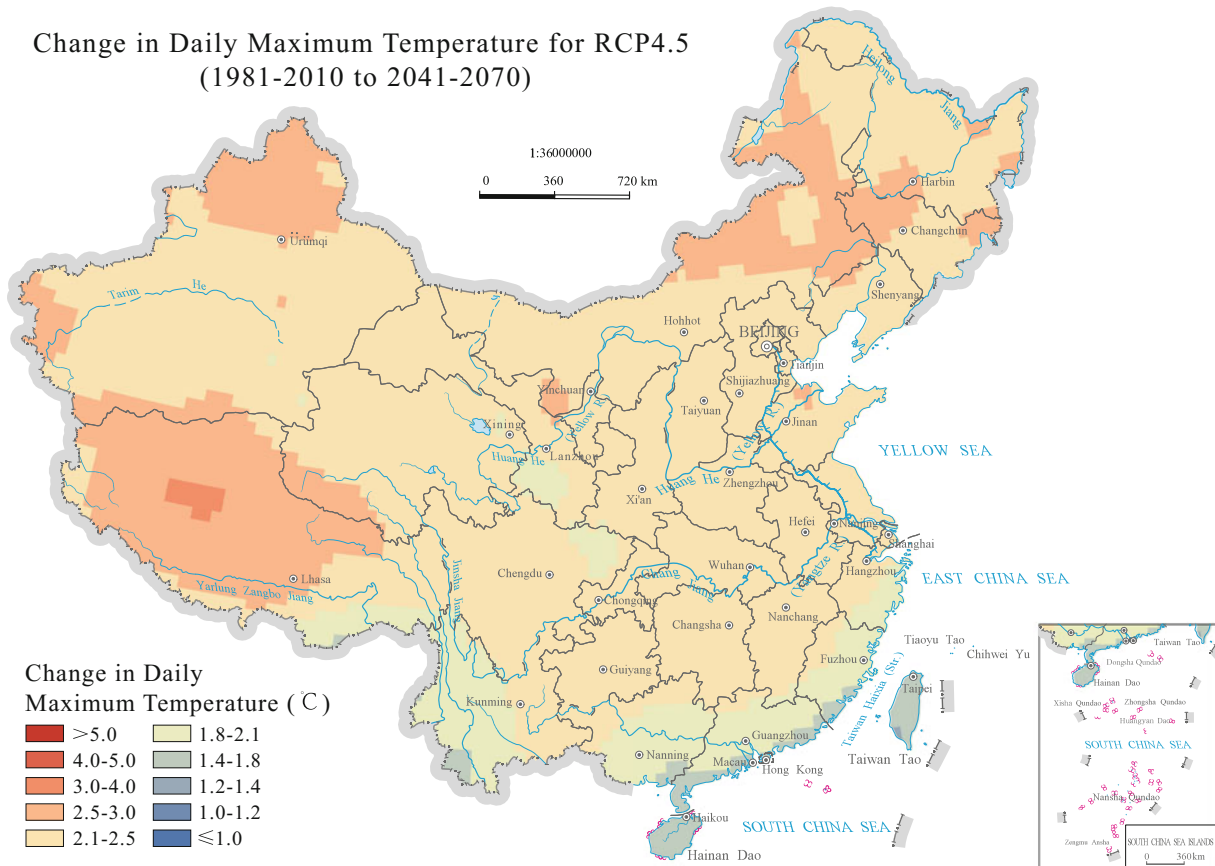
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP4.5
(1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



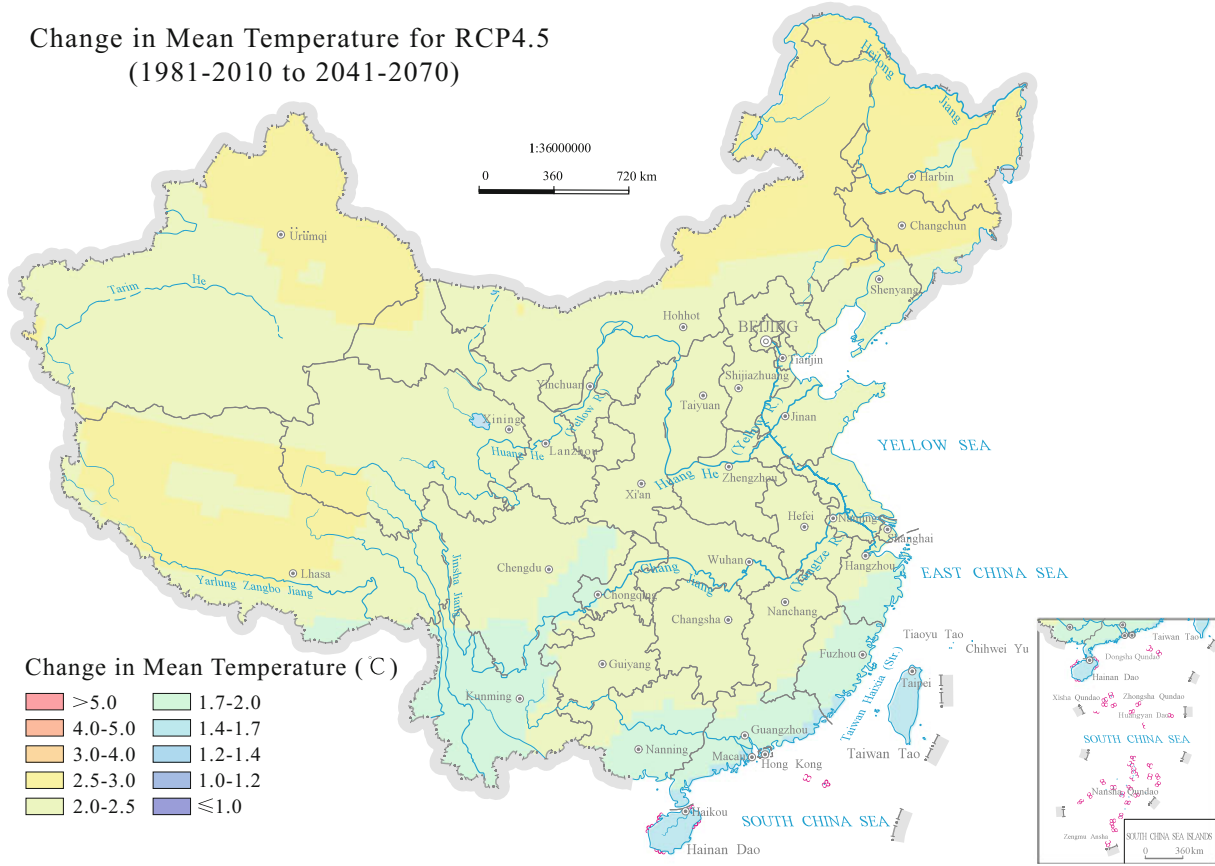
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



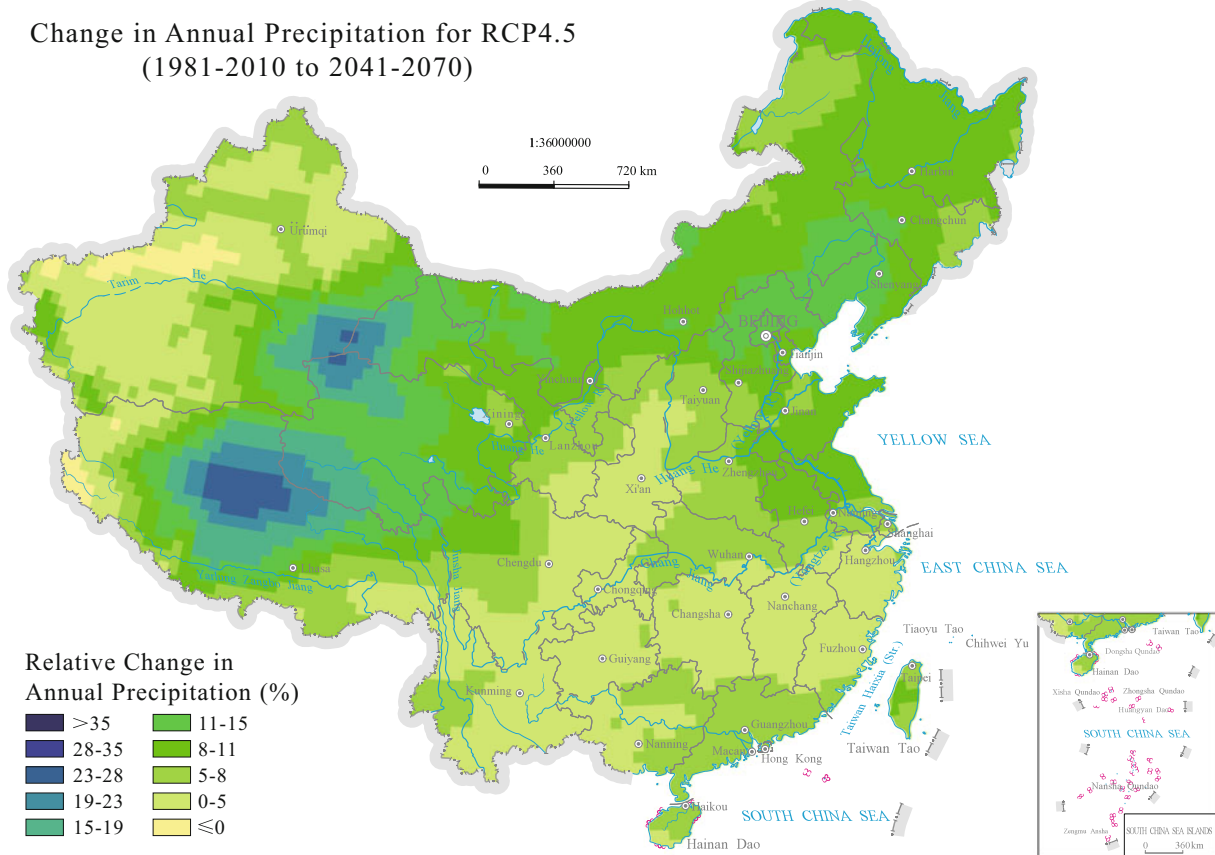
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



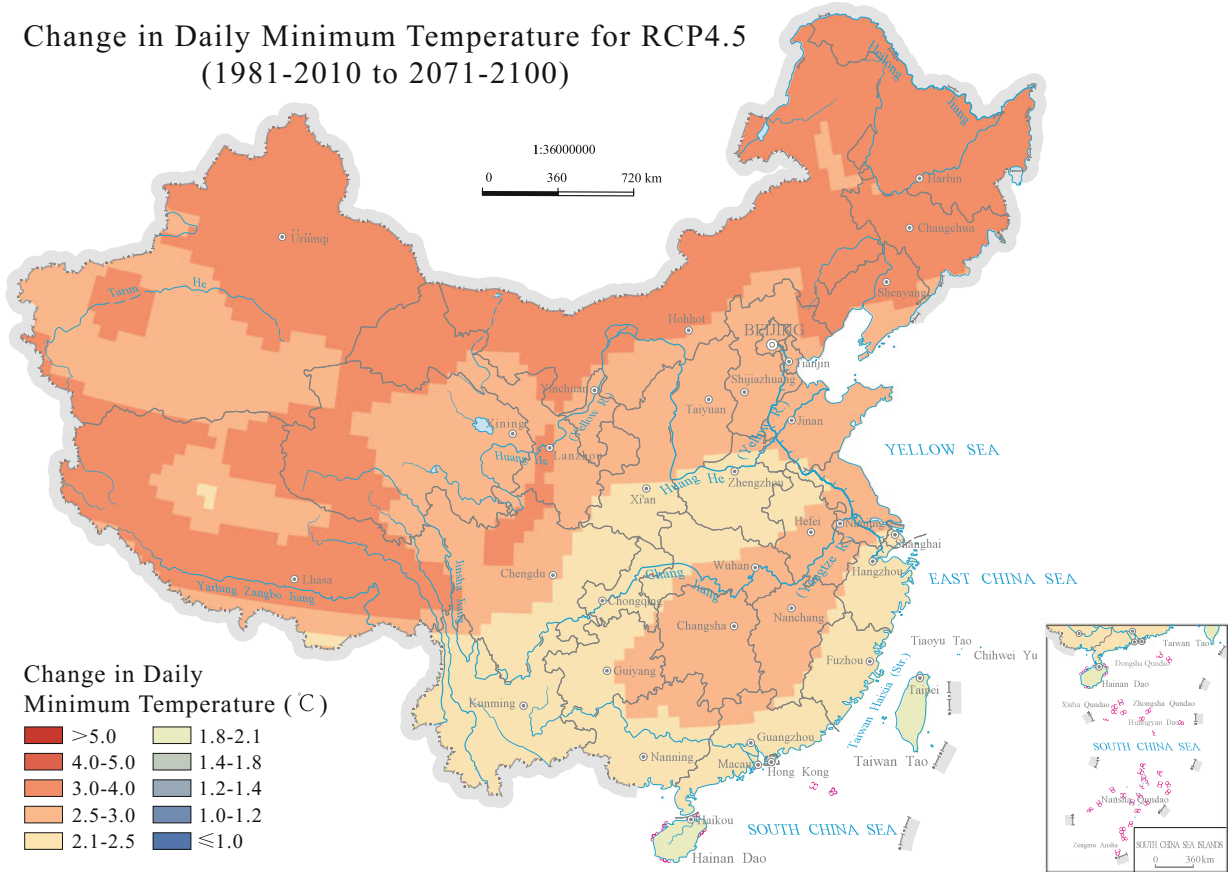
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP4.5
(1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



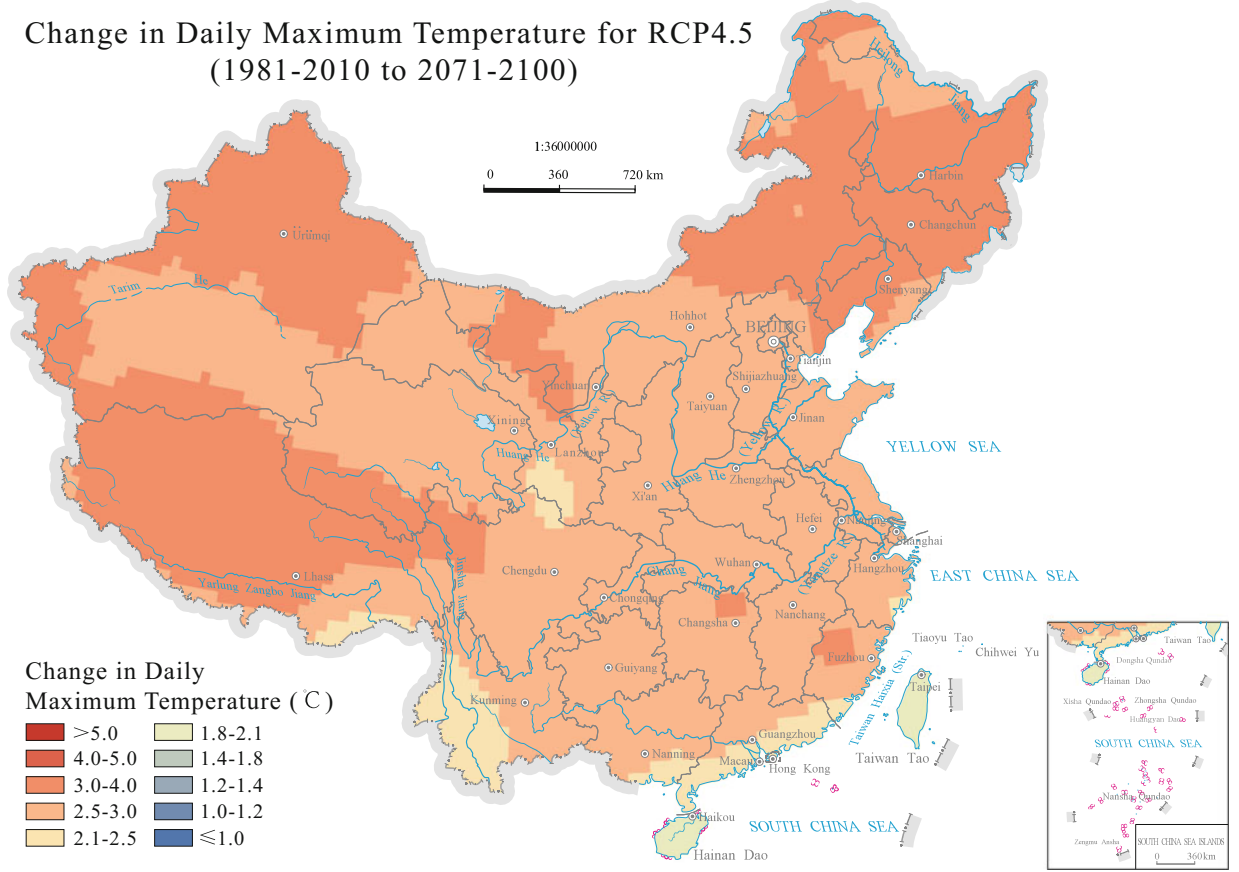
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP4.5
(1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



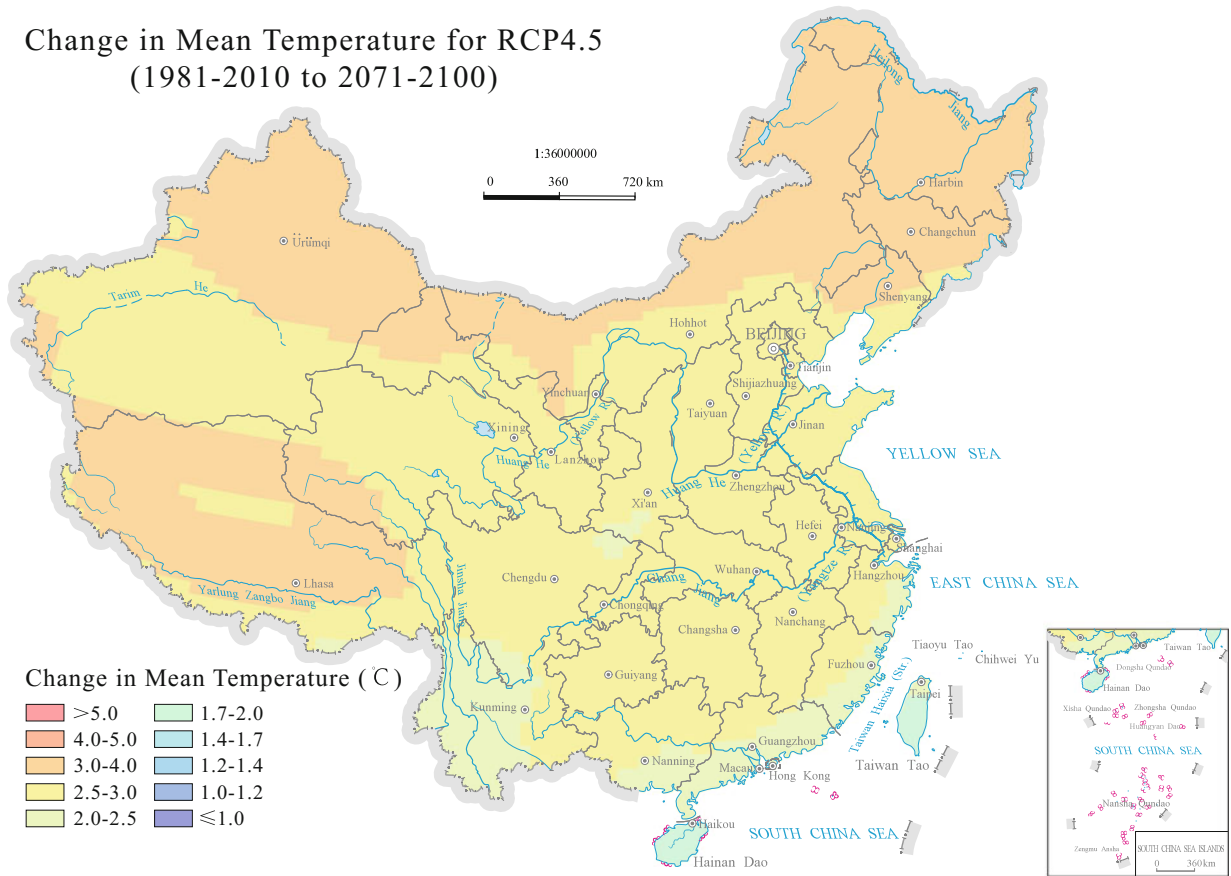
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



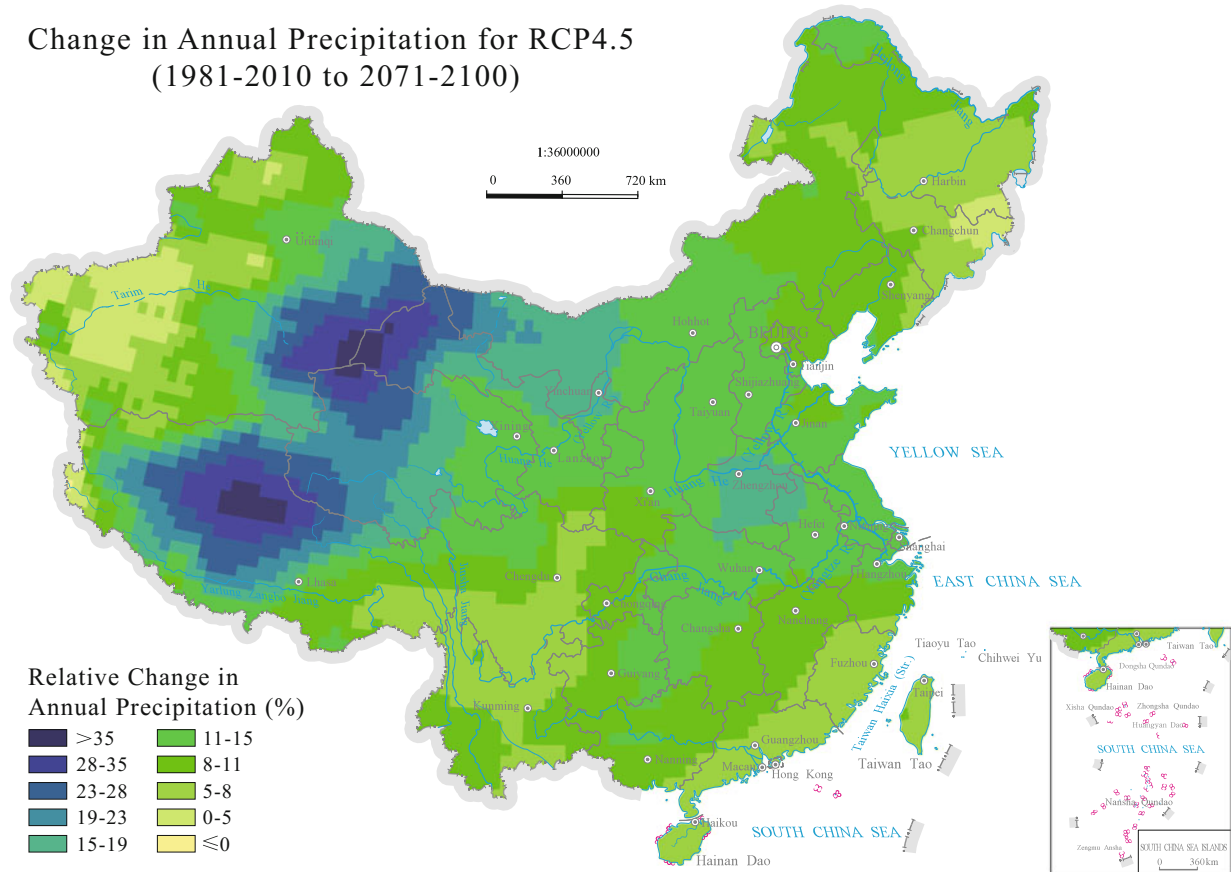
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



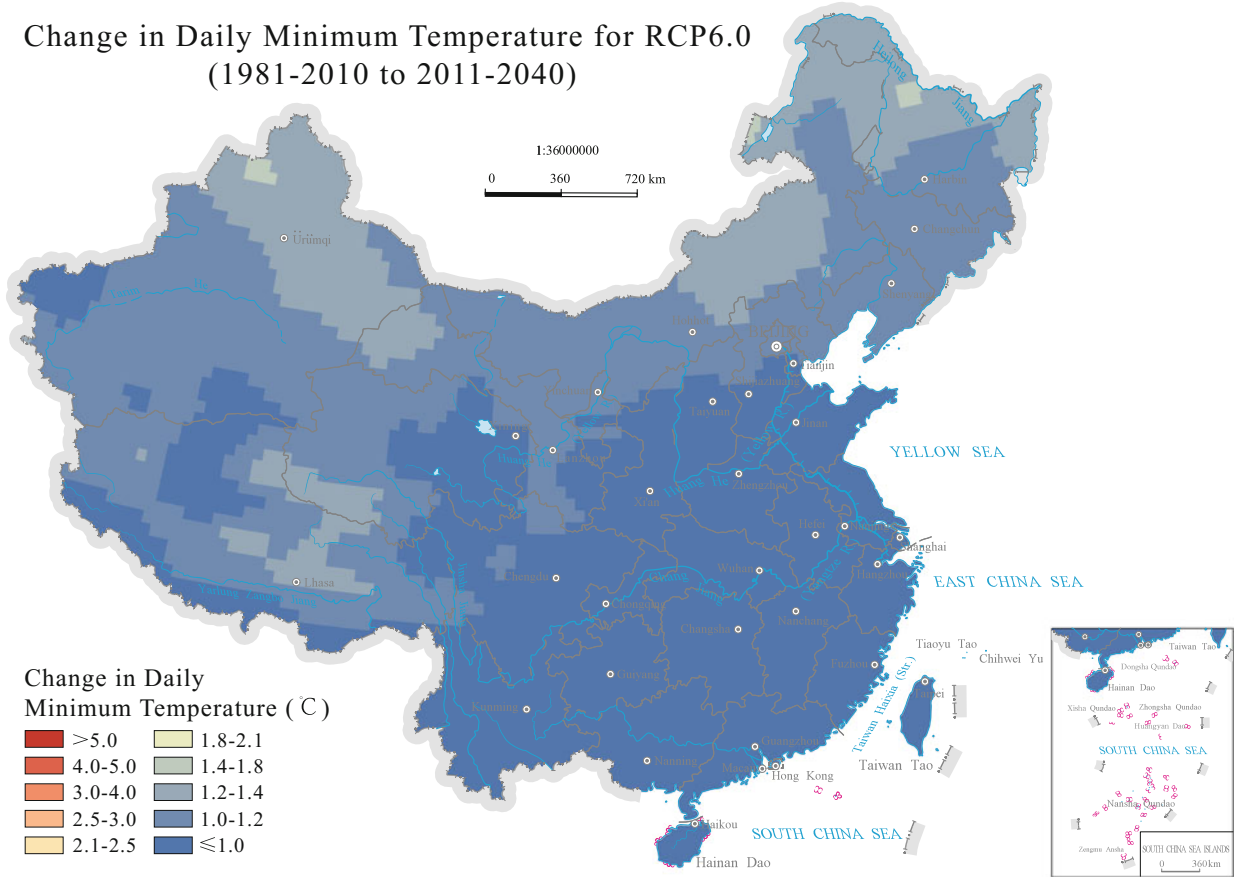
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



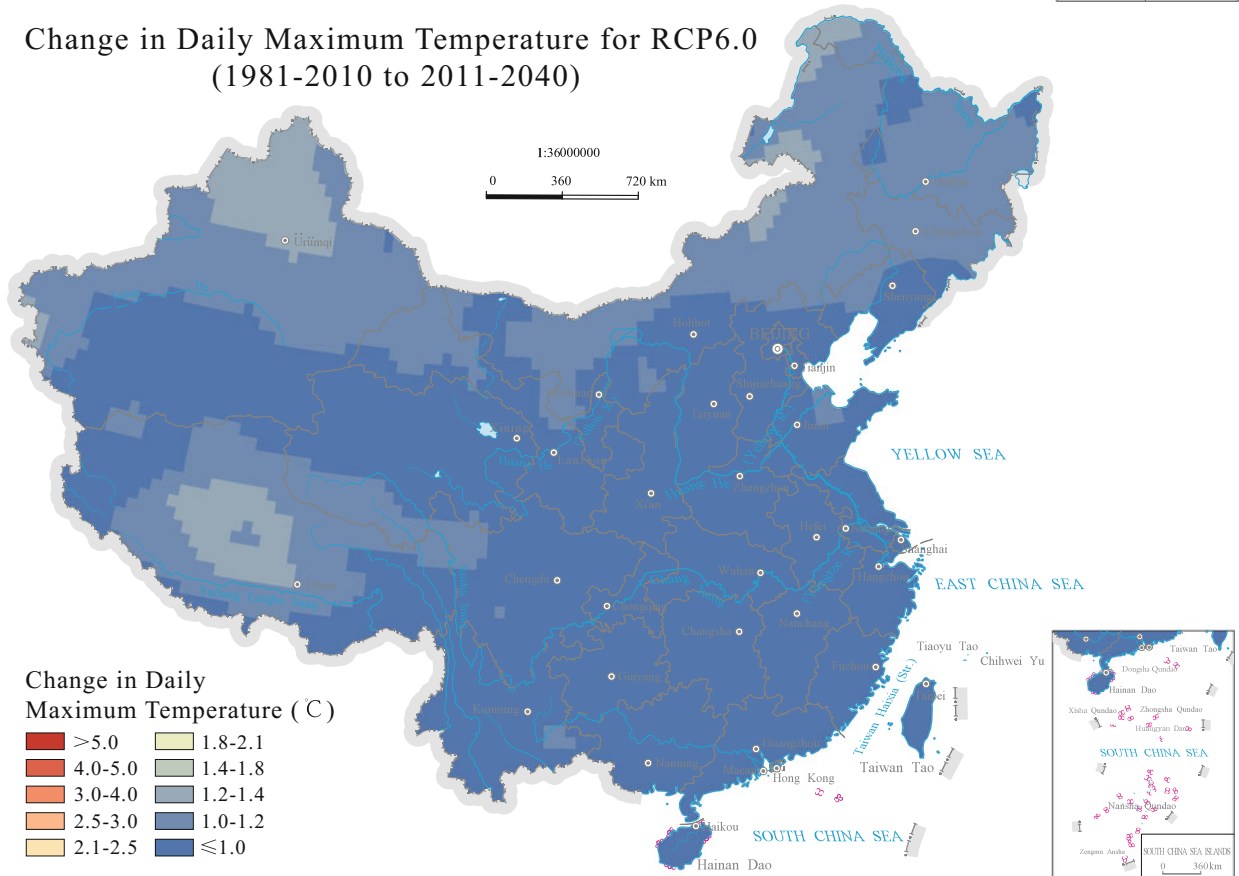
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP4.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



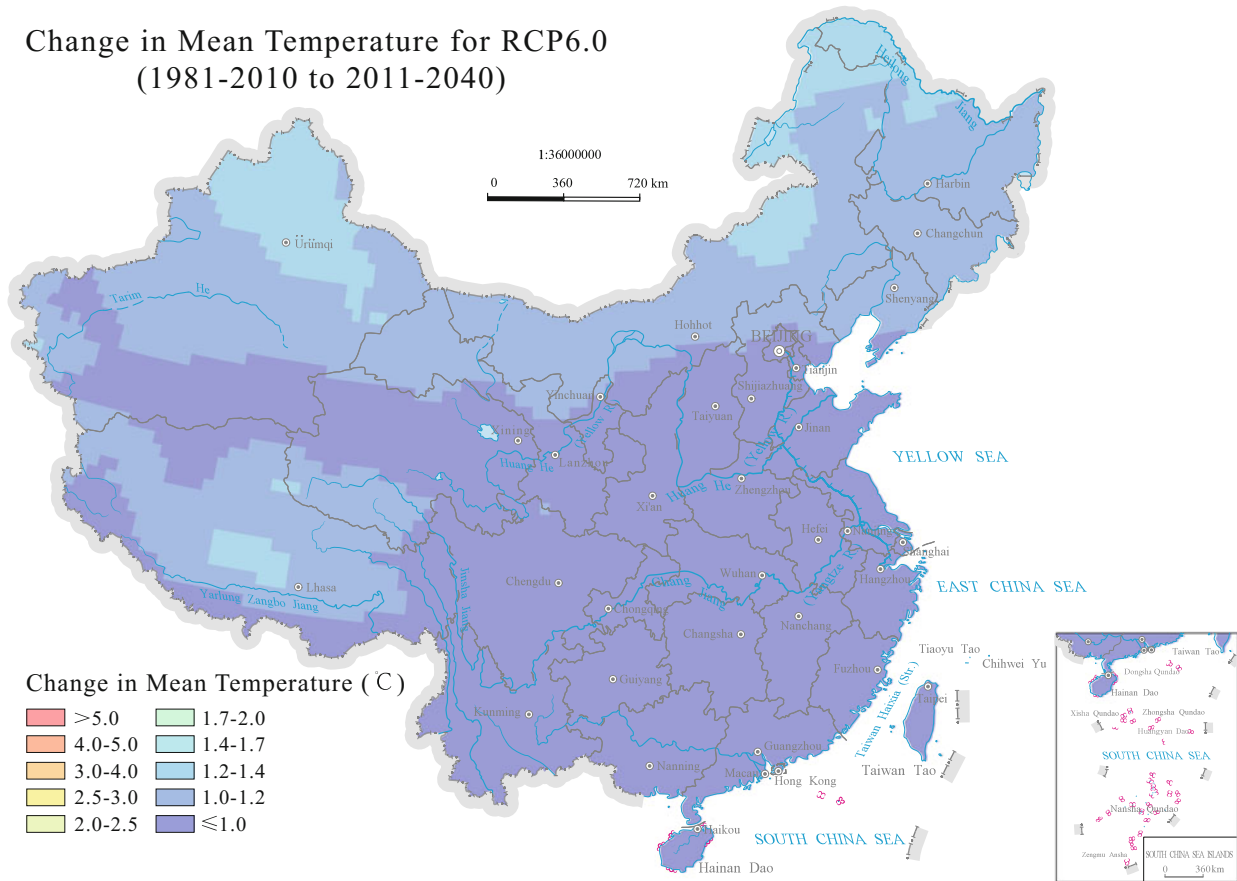
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



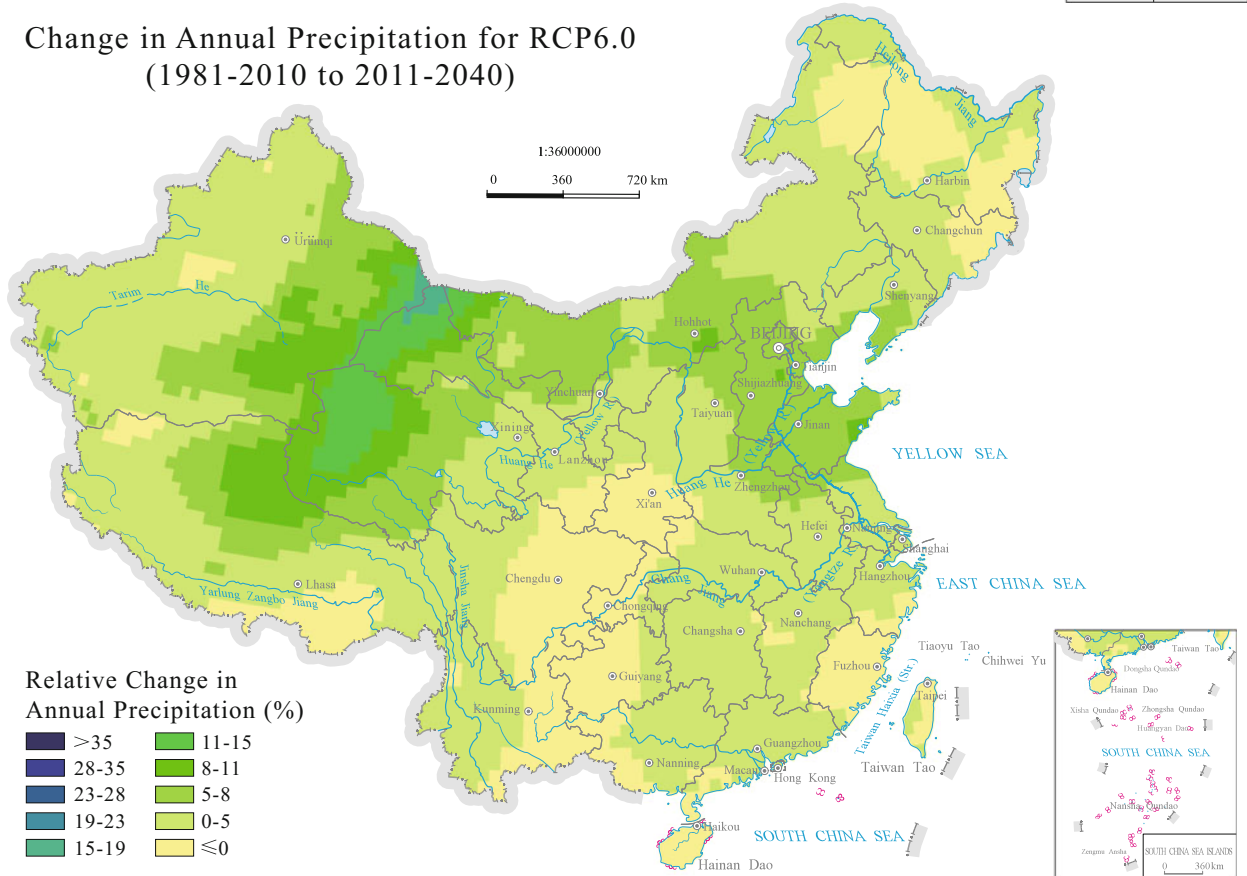
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



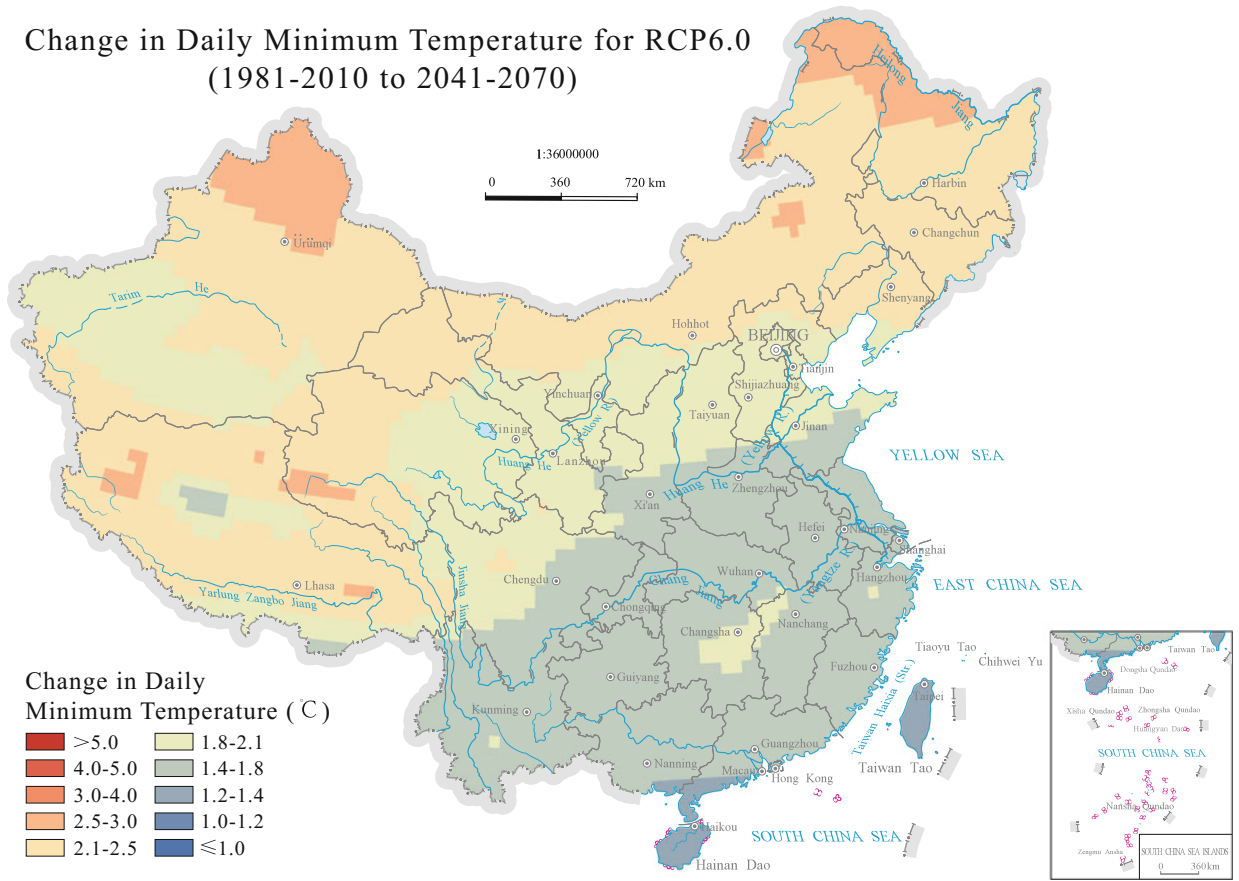
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



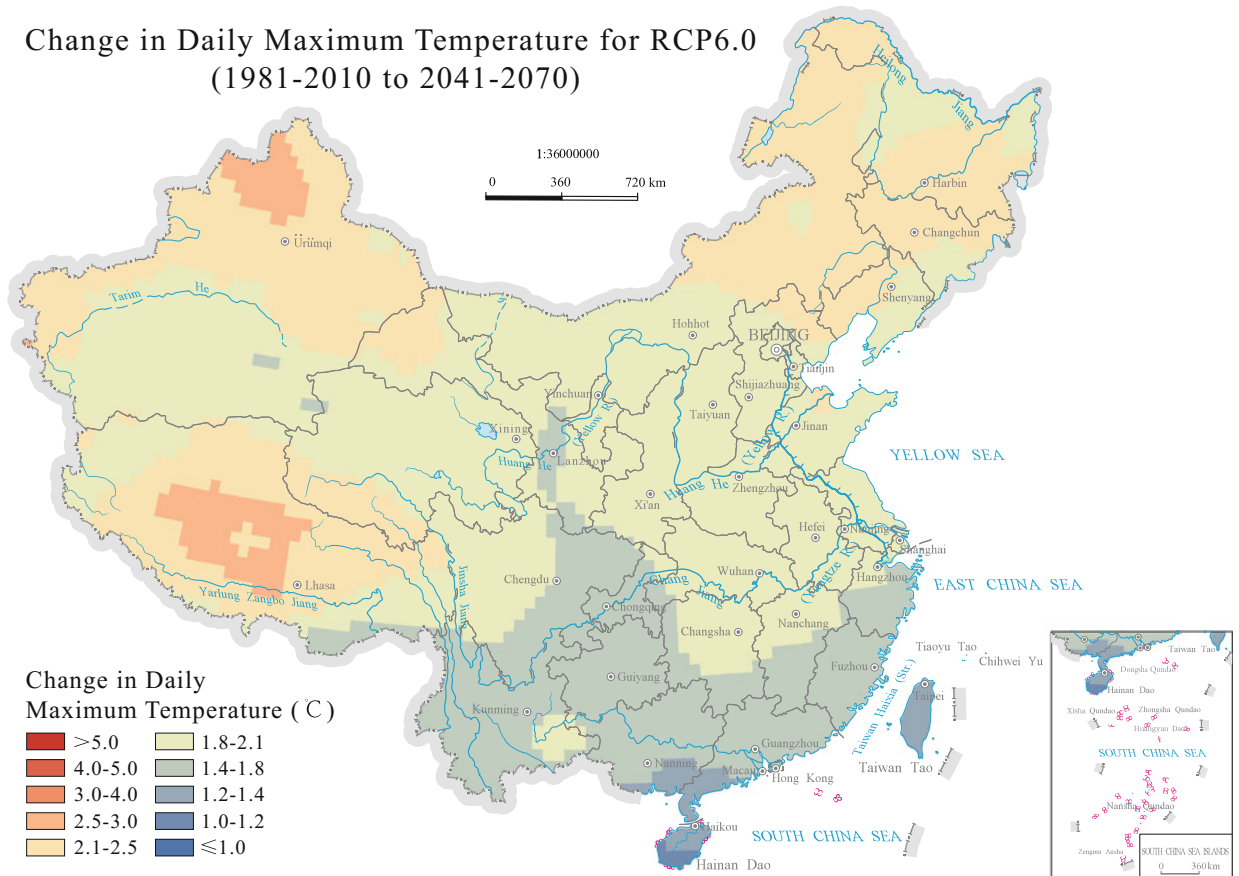
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



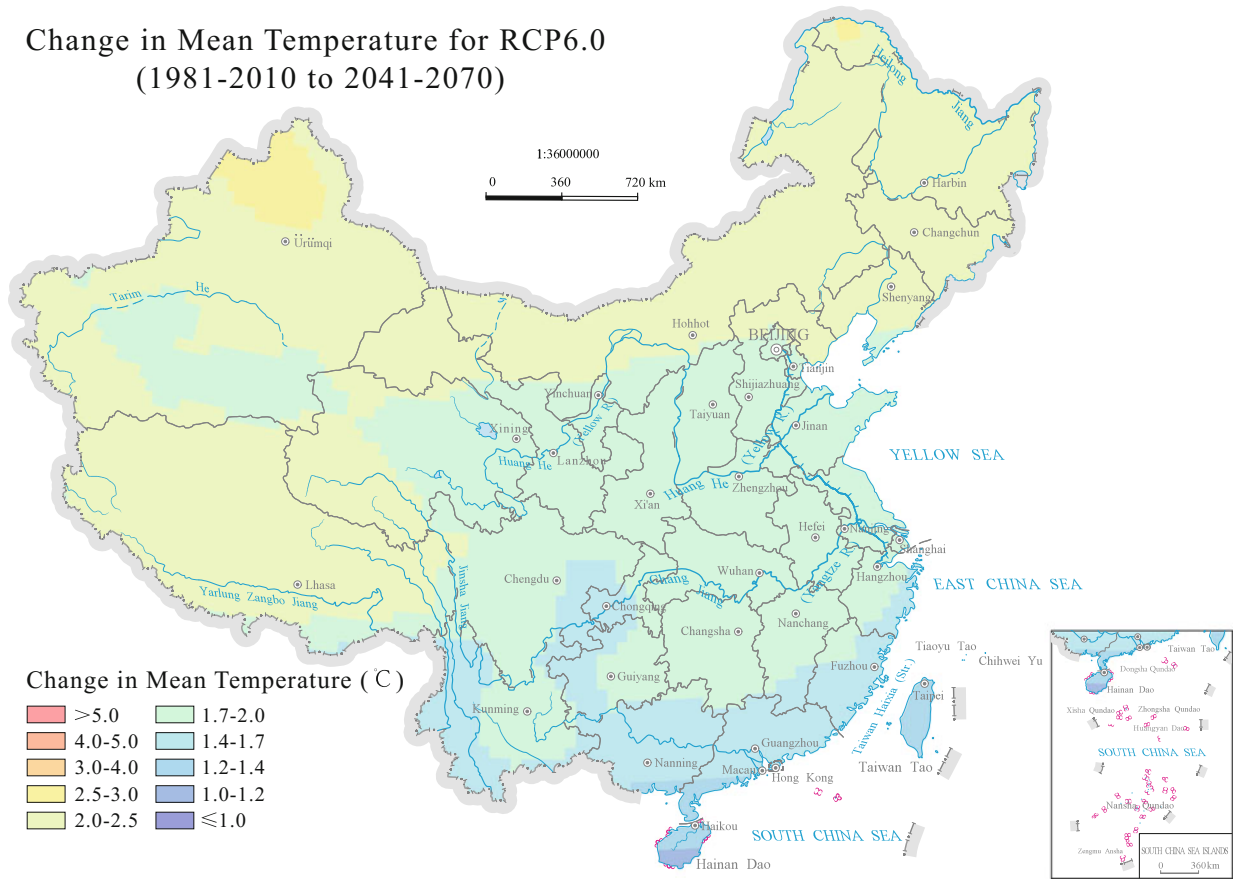
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



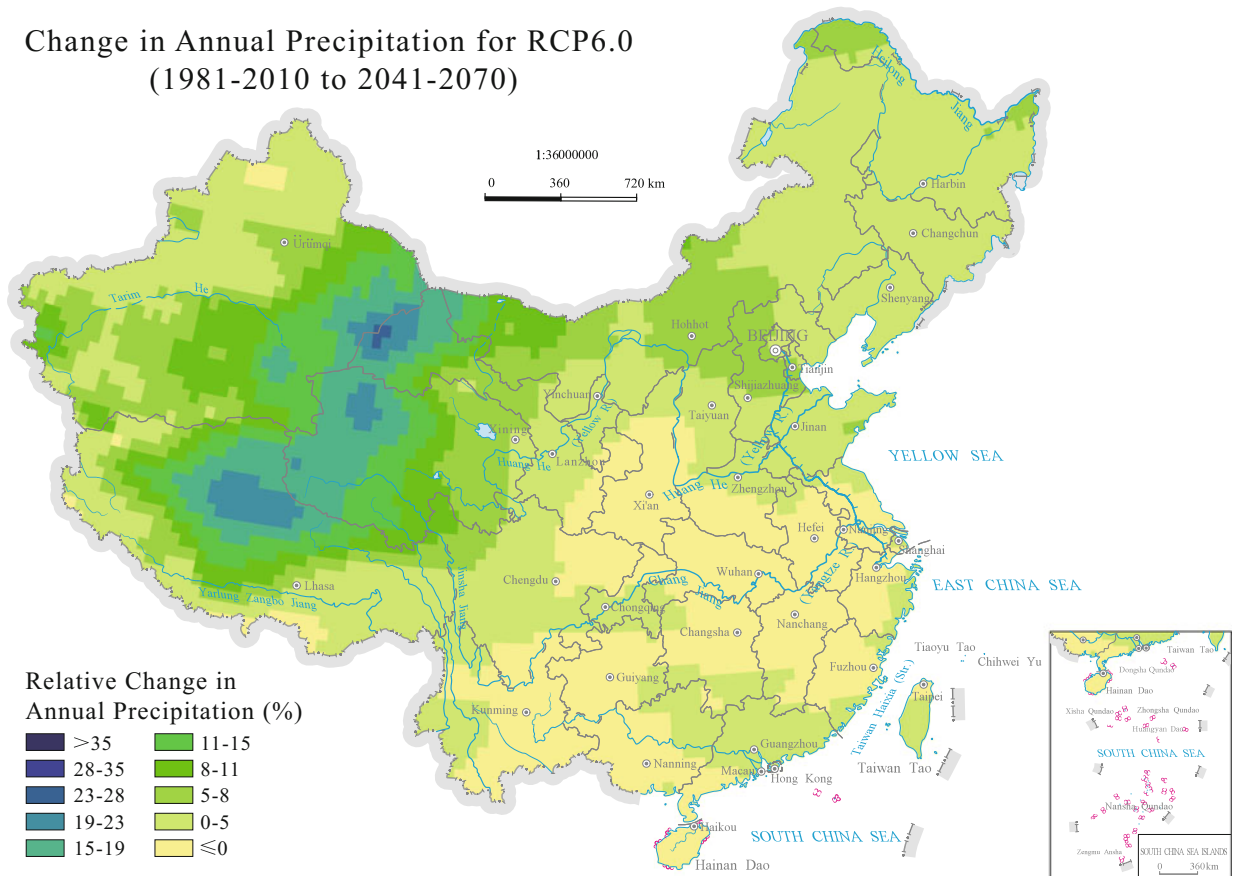
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



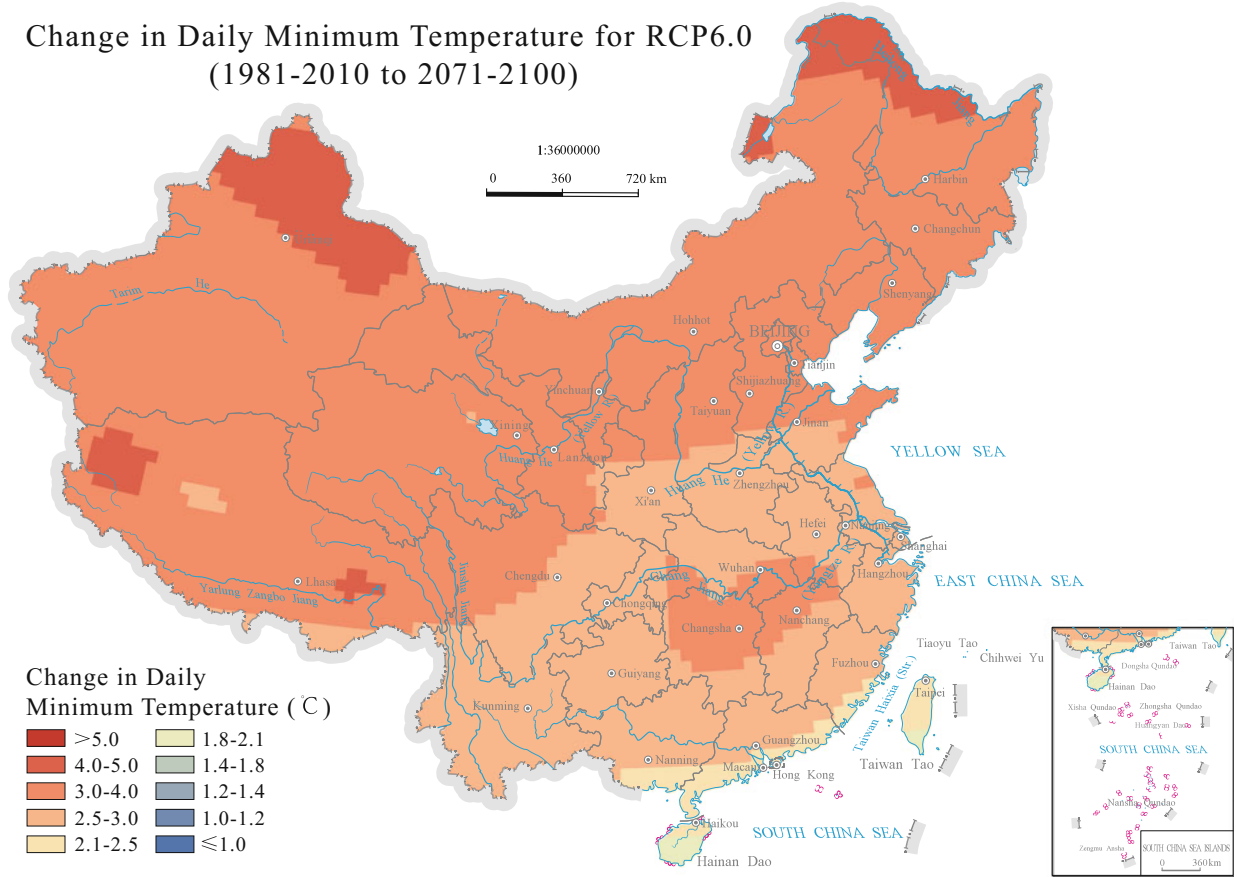
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



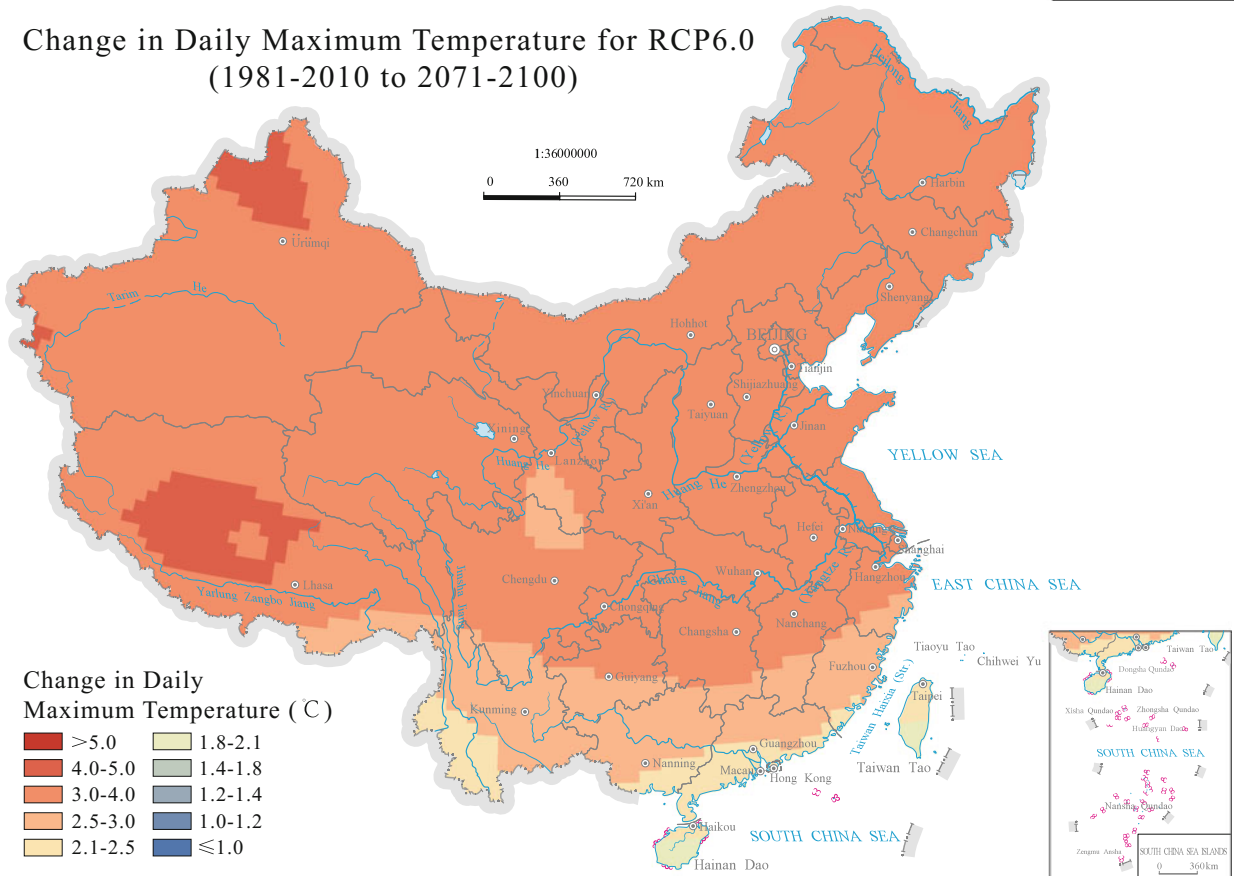
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



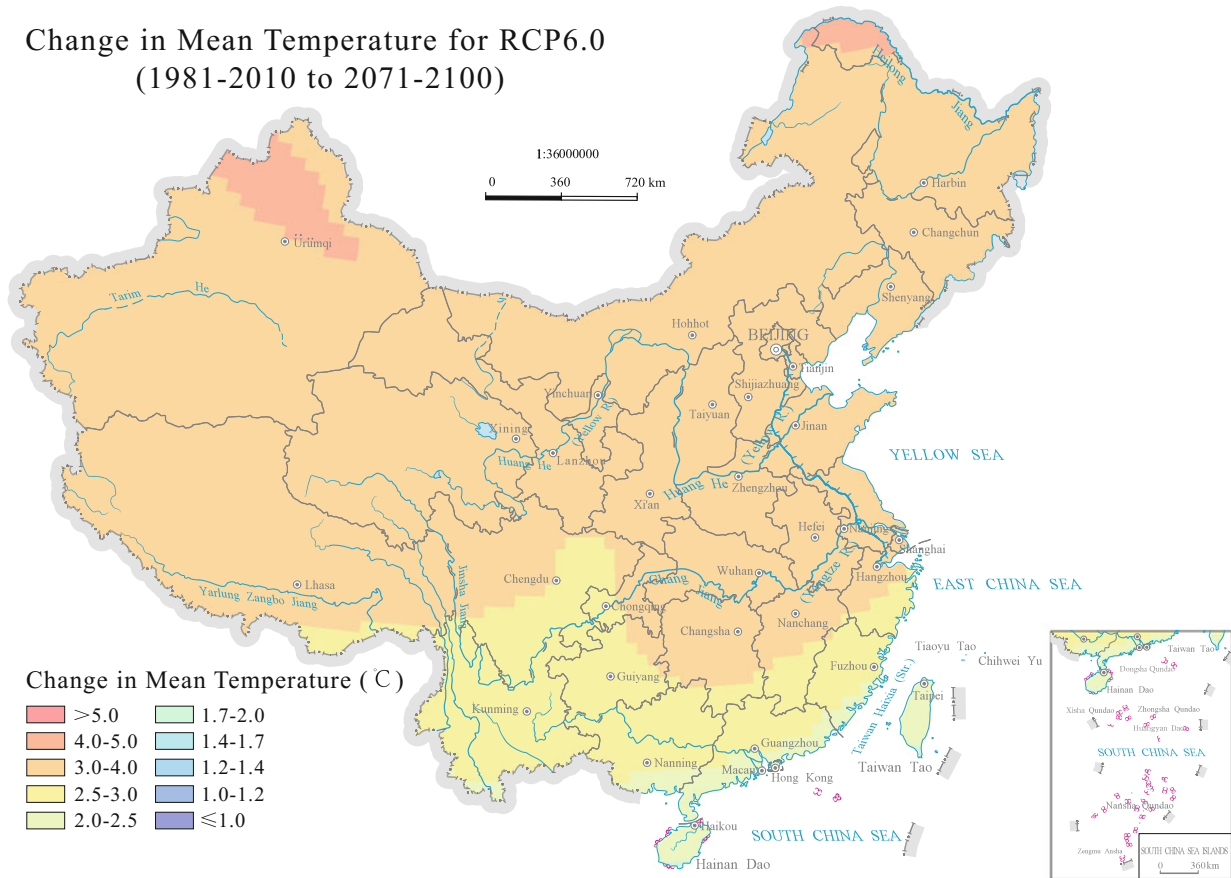
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



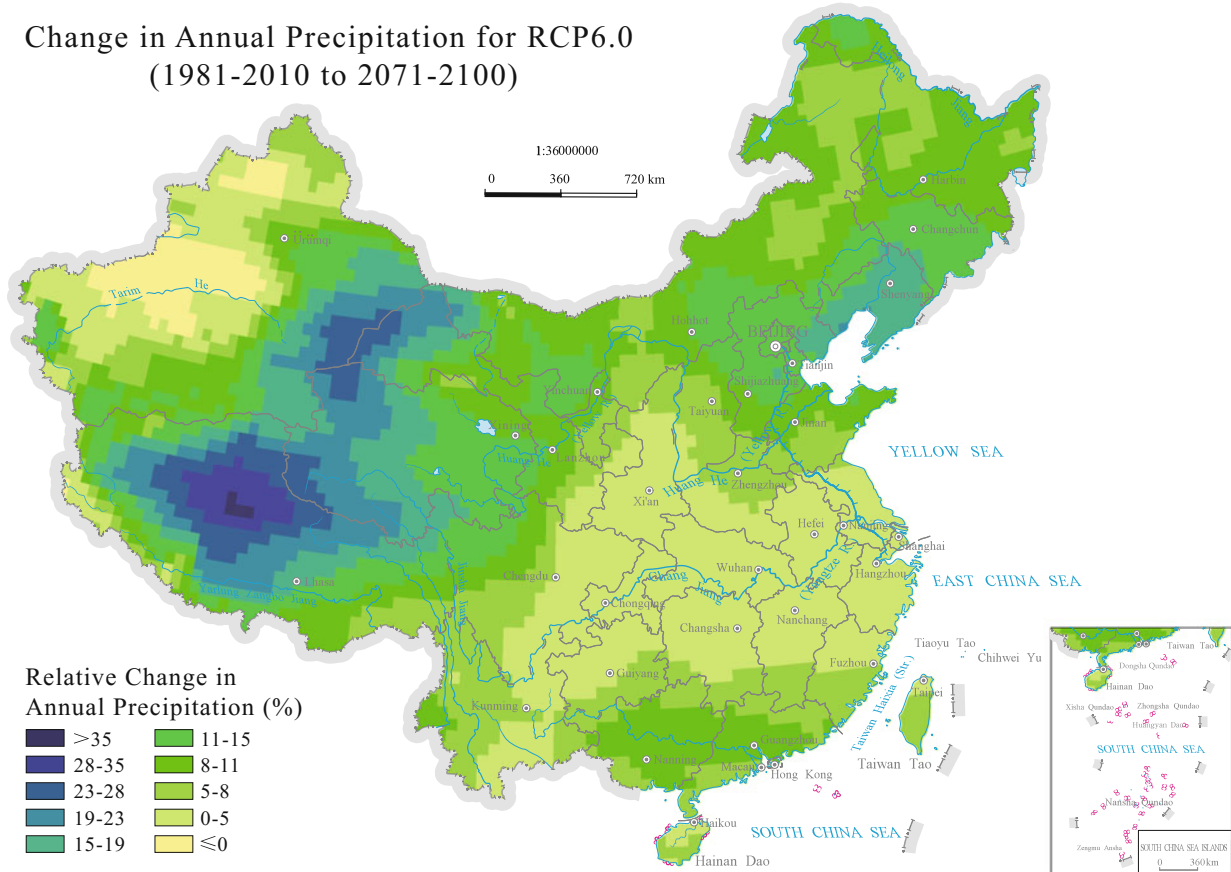
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



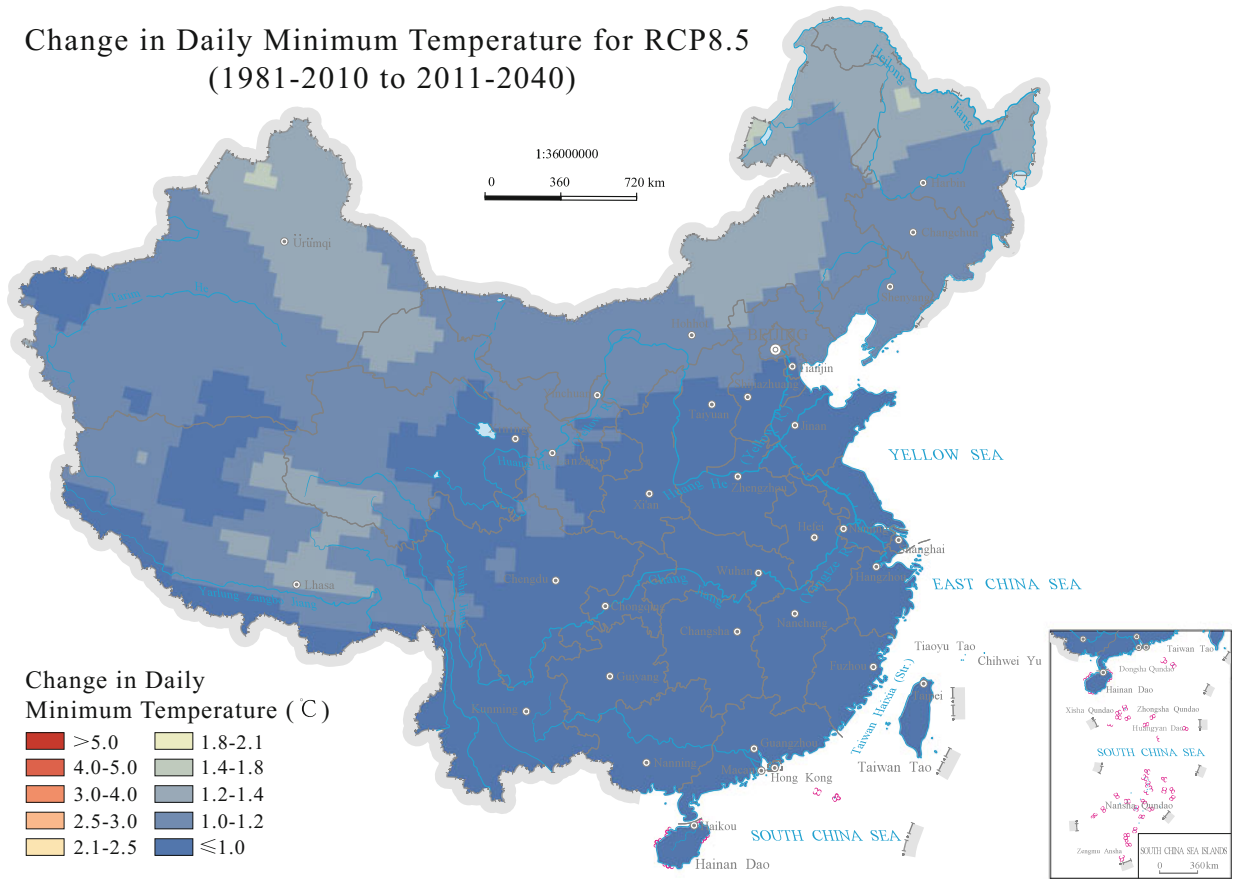
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



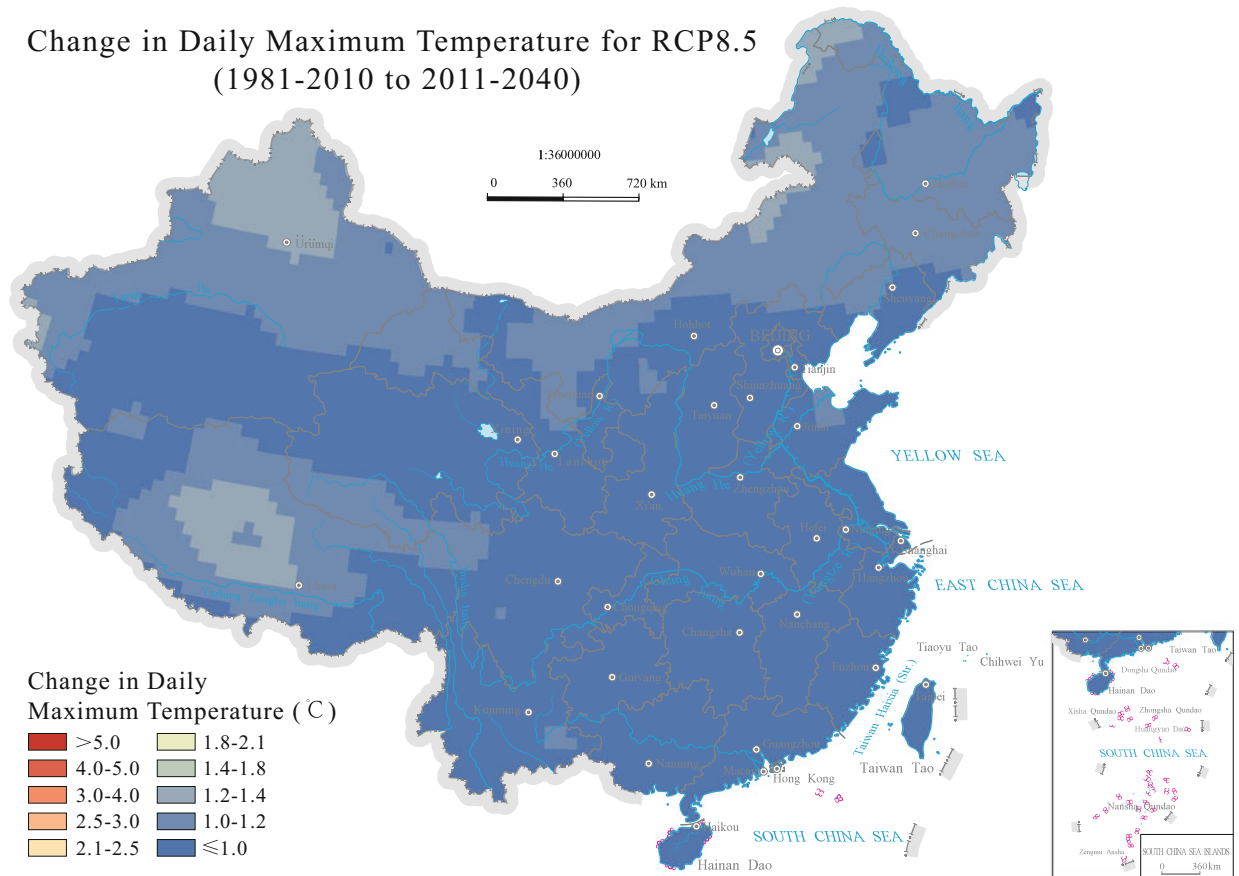
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP6.0 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



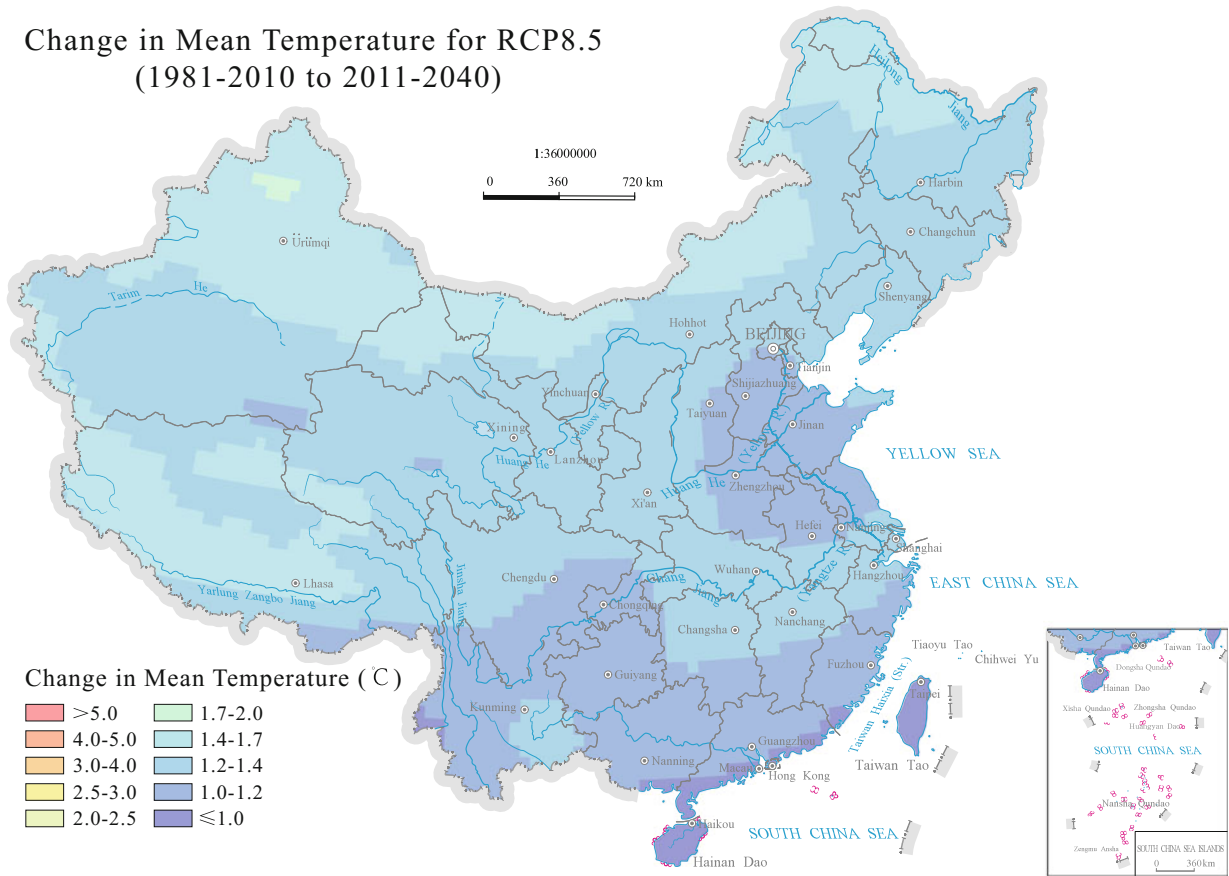
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



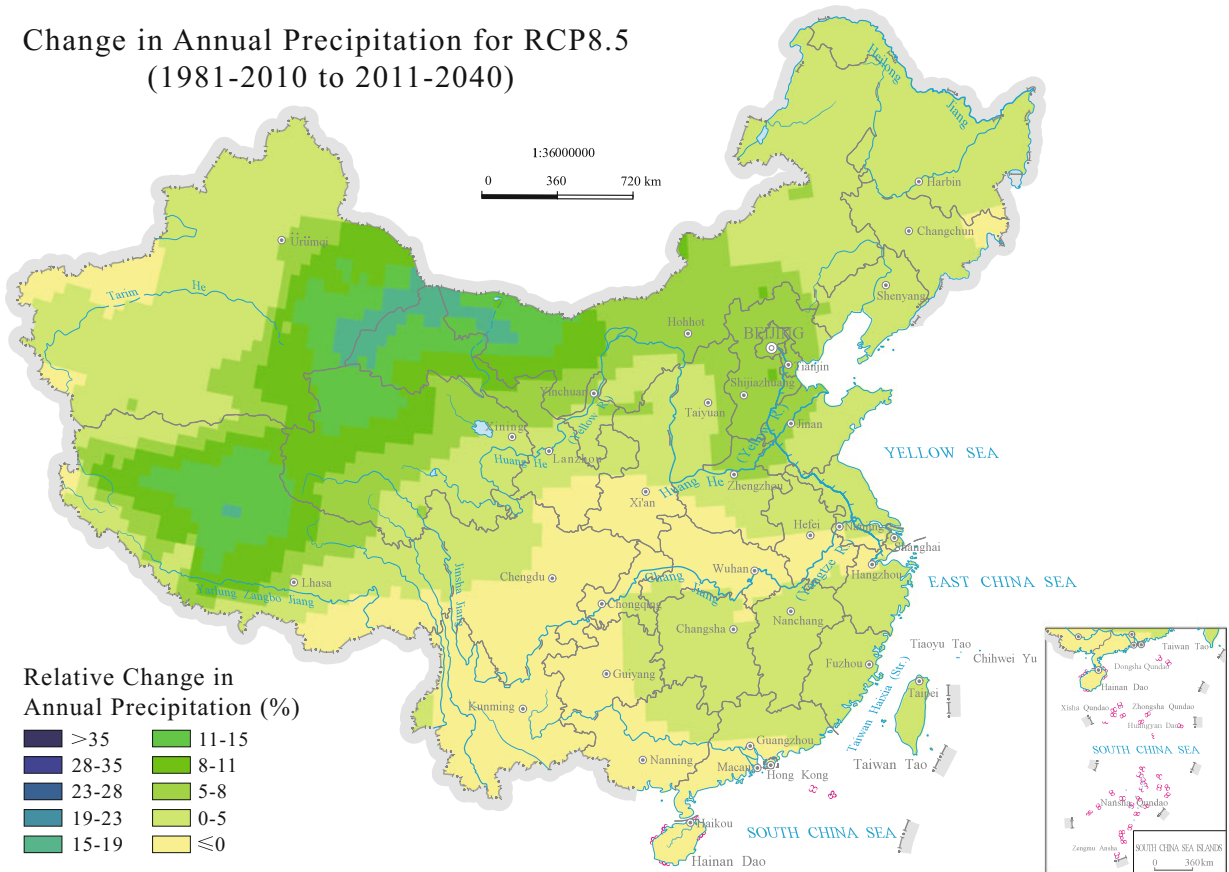
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



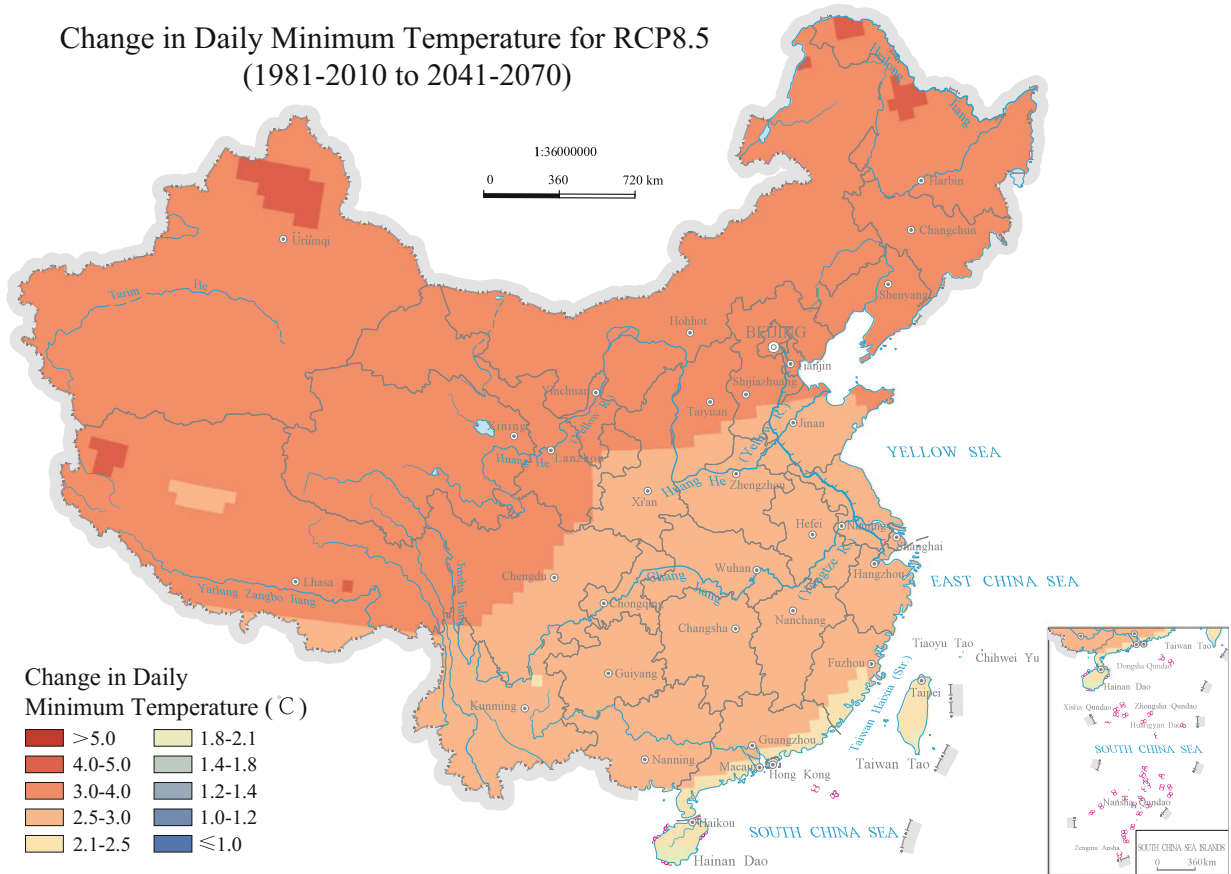
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



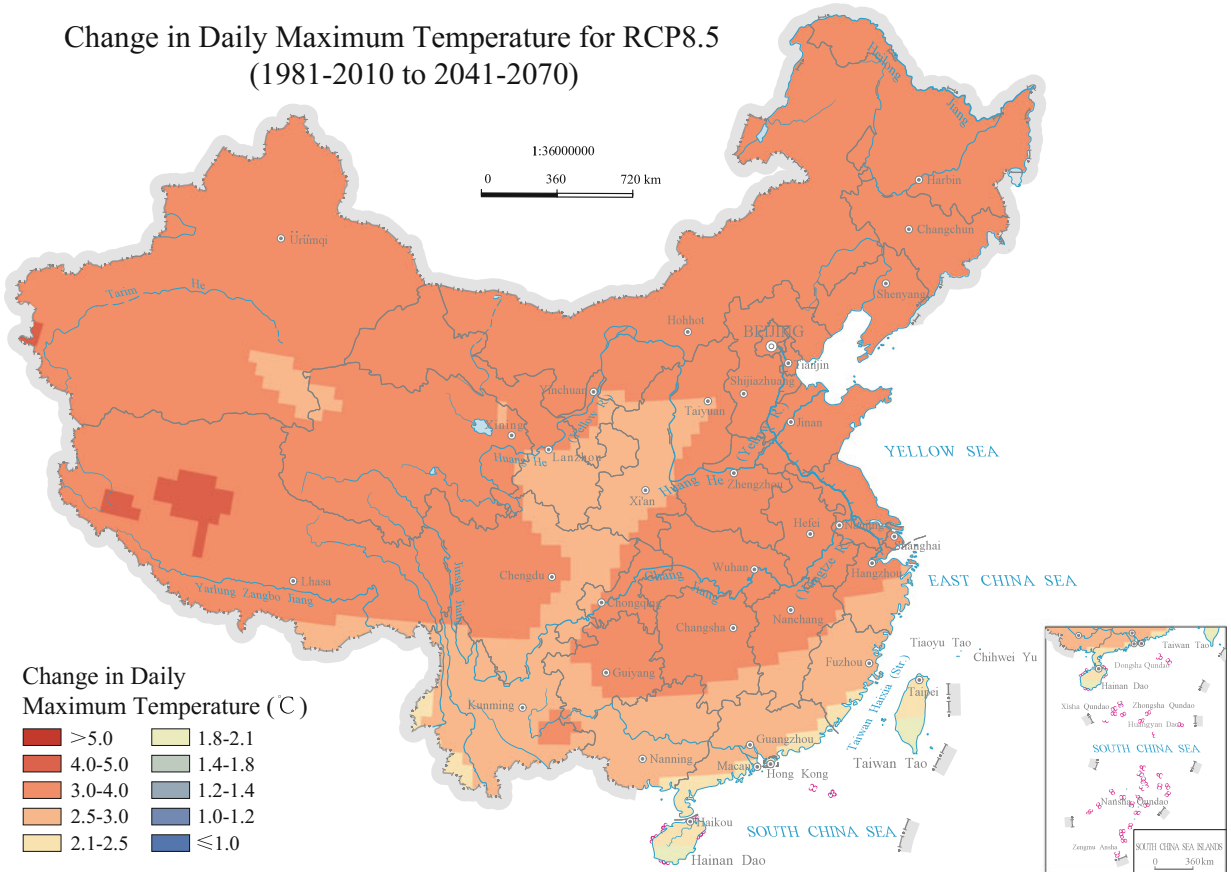
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2011-2040)



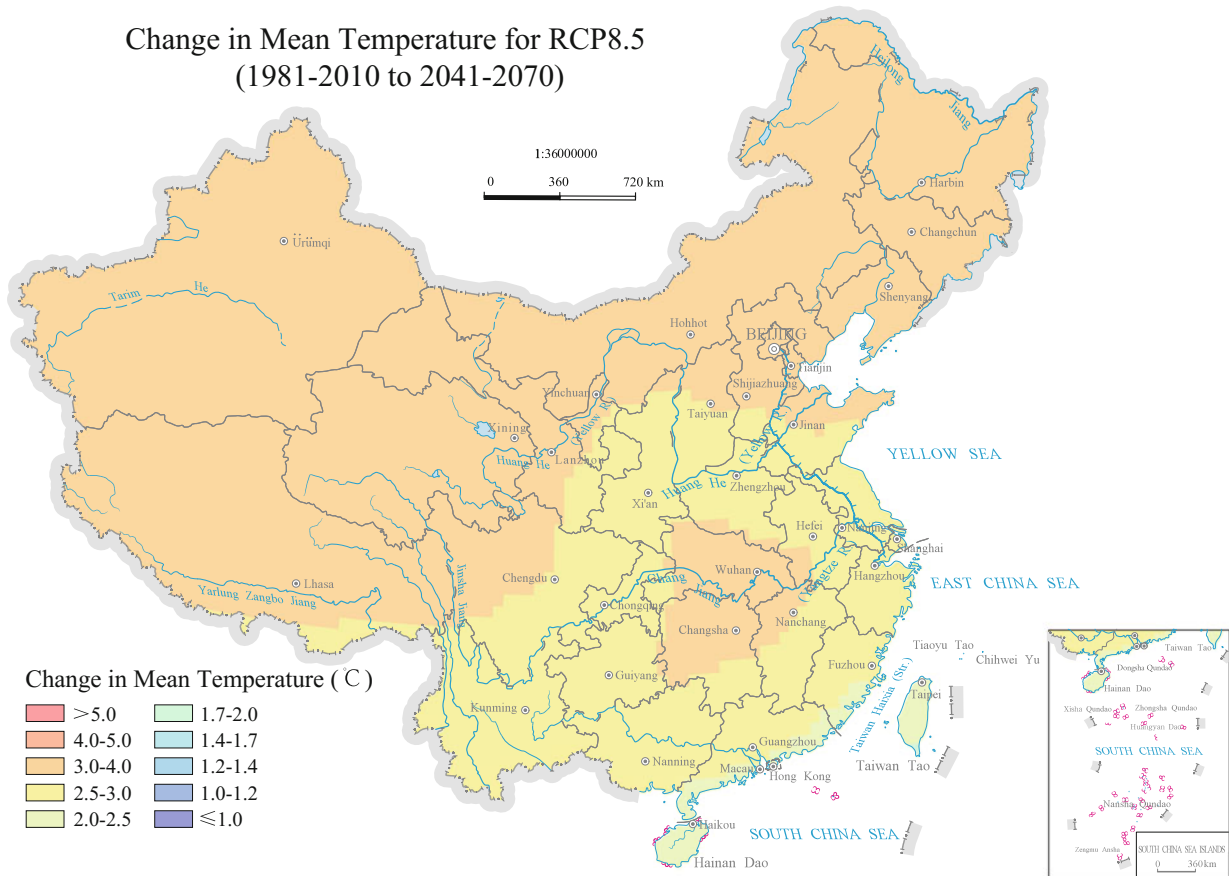
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



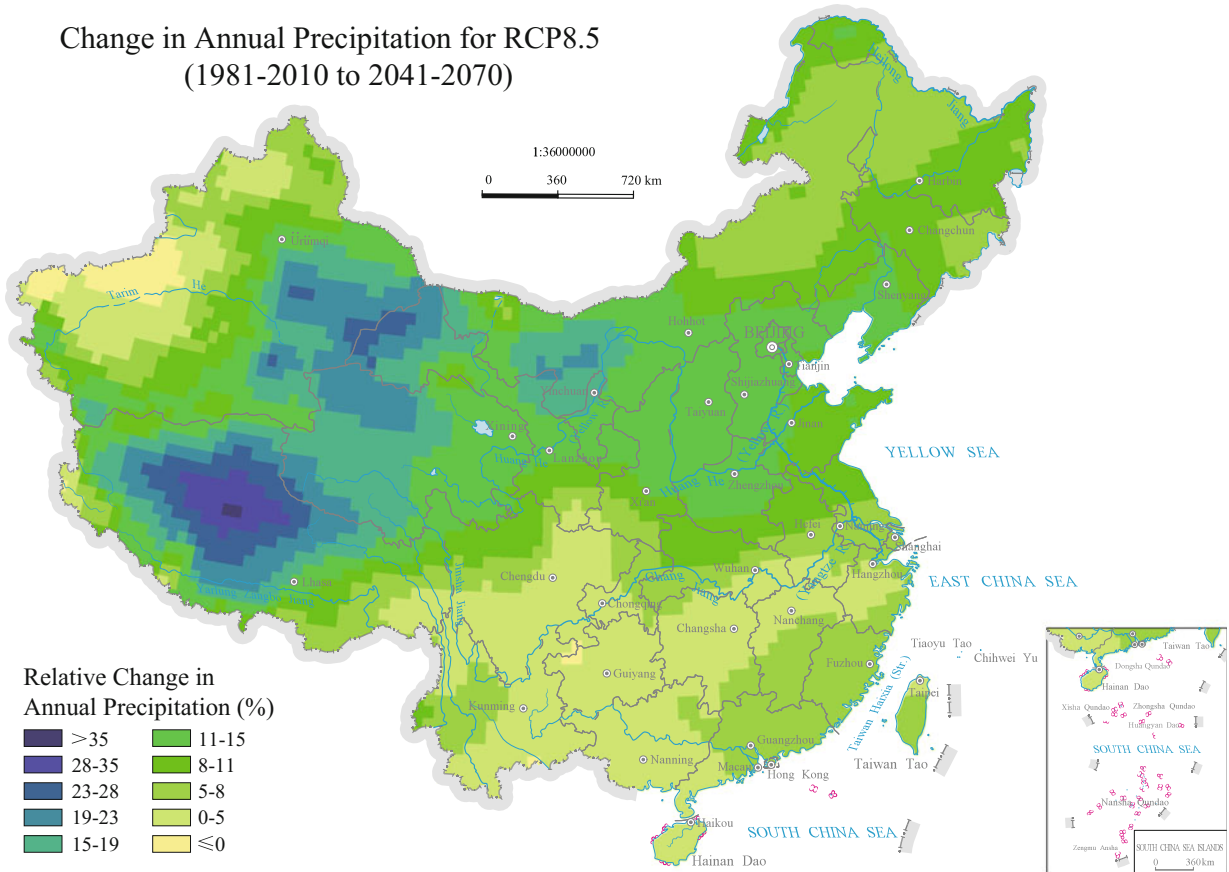
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



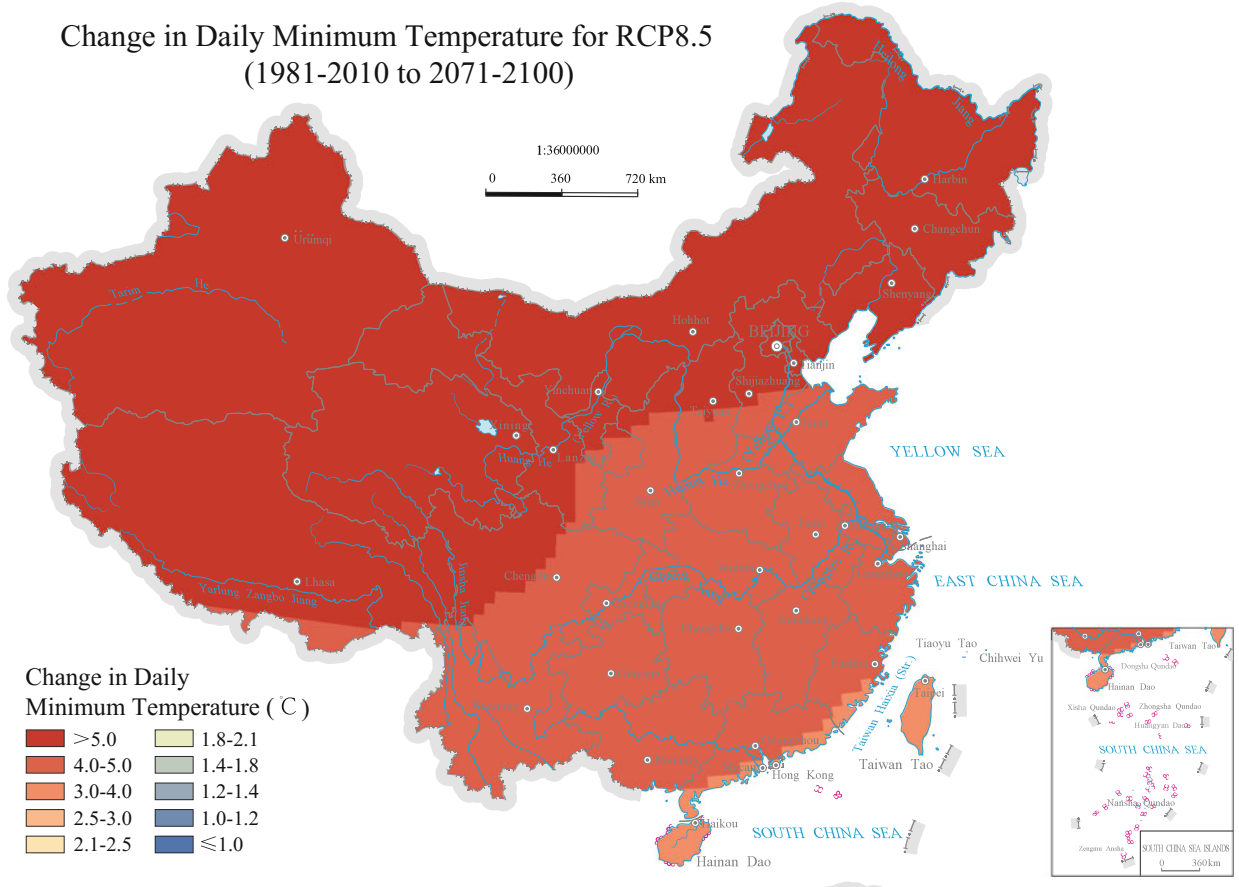
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



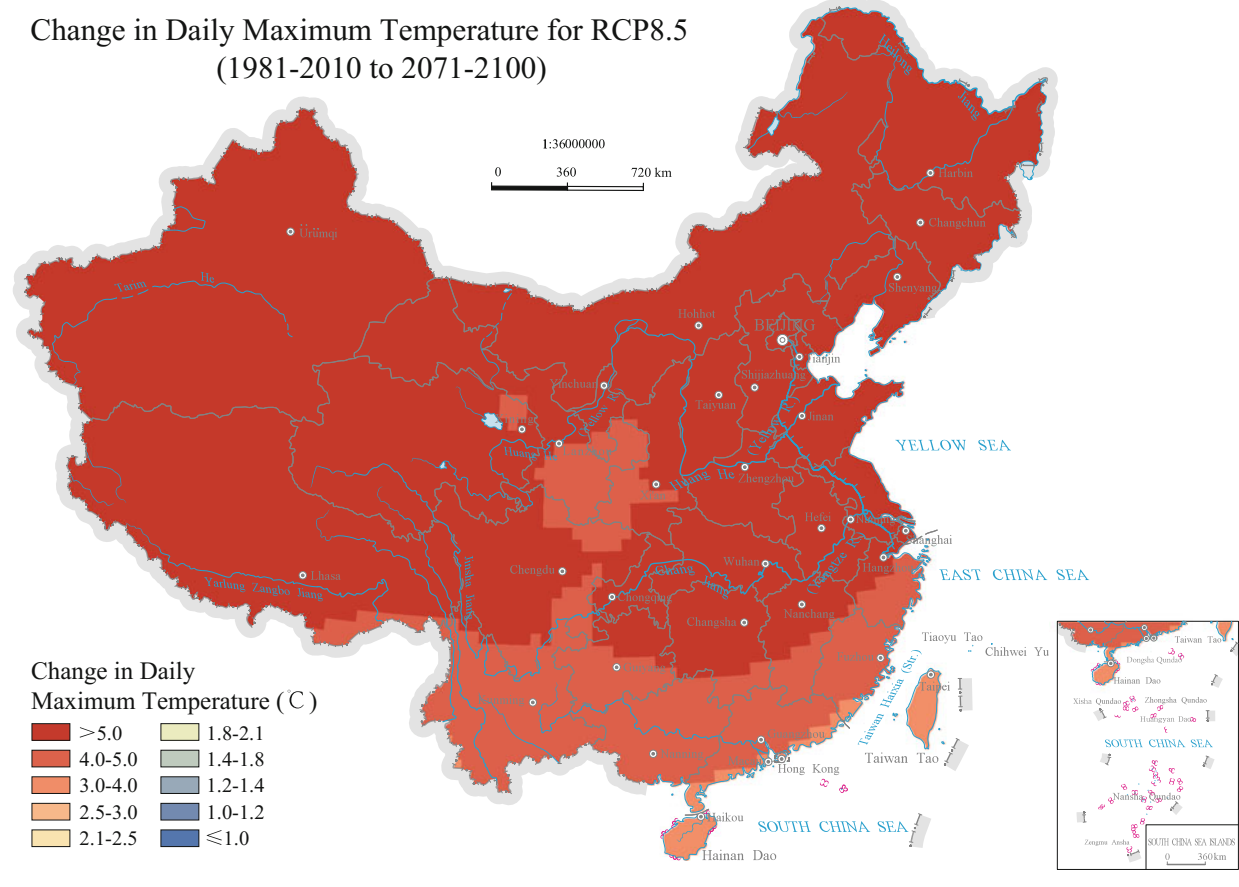
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2041-2070)



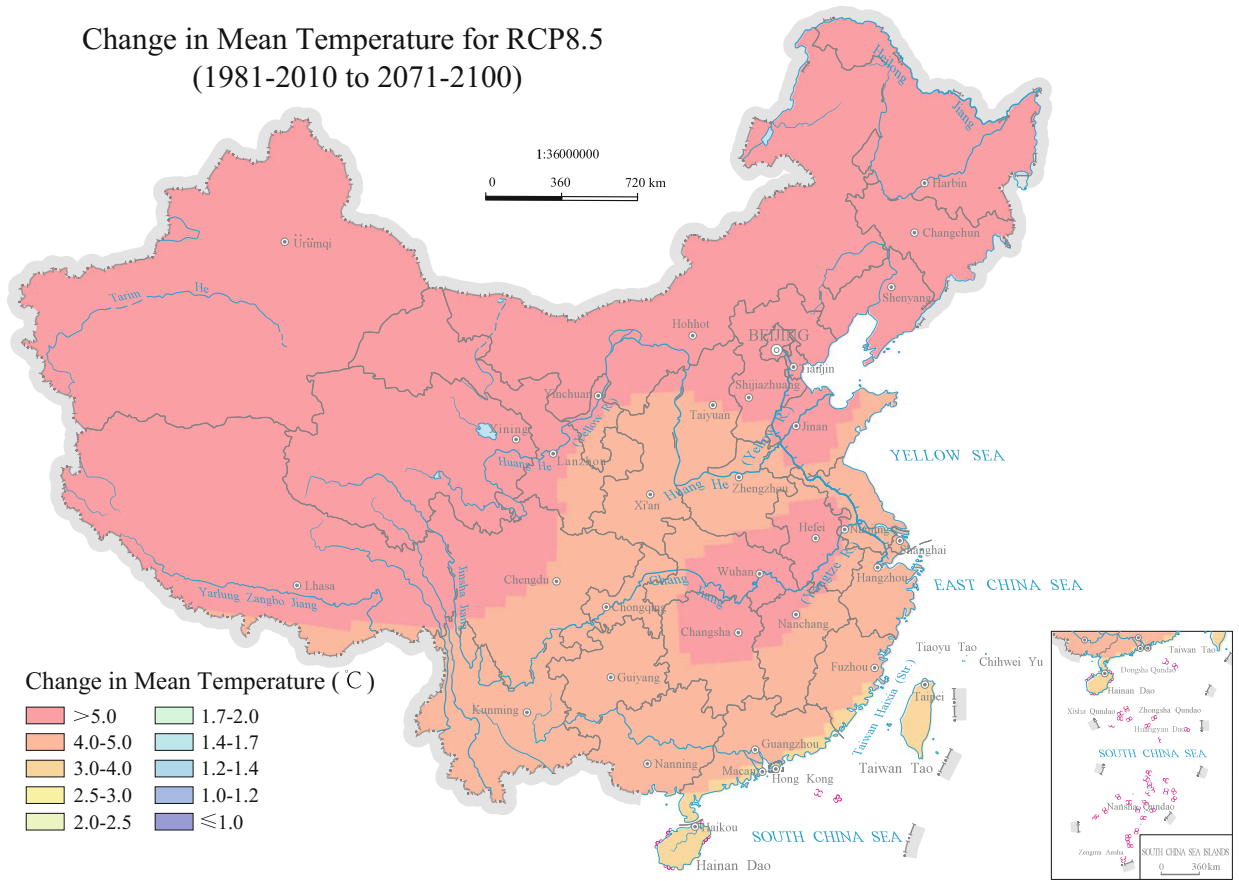
Change in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



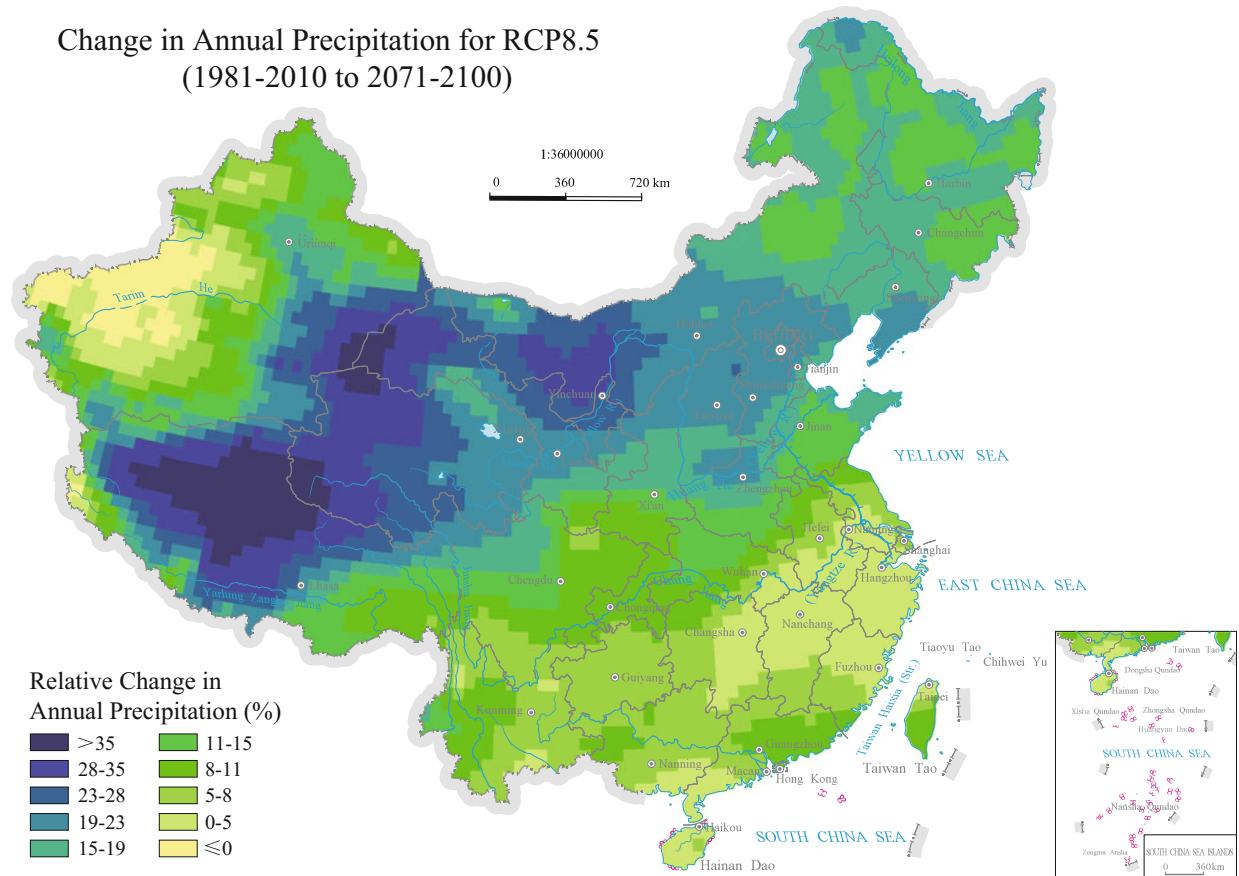
Change in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



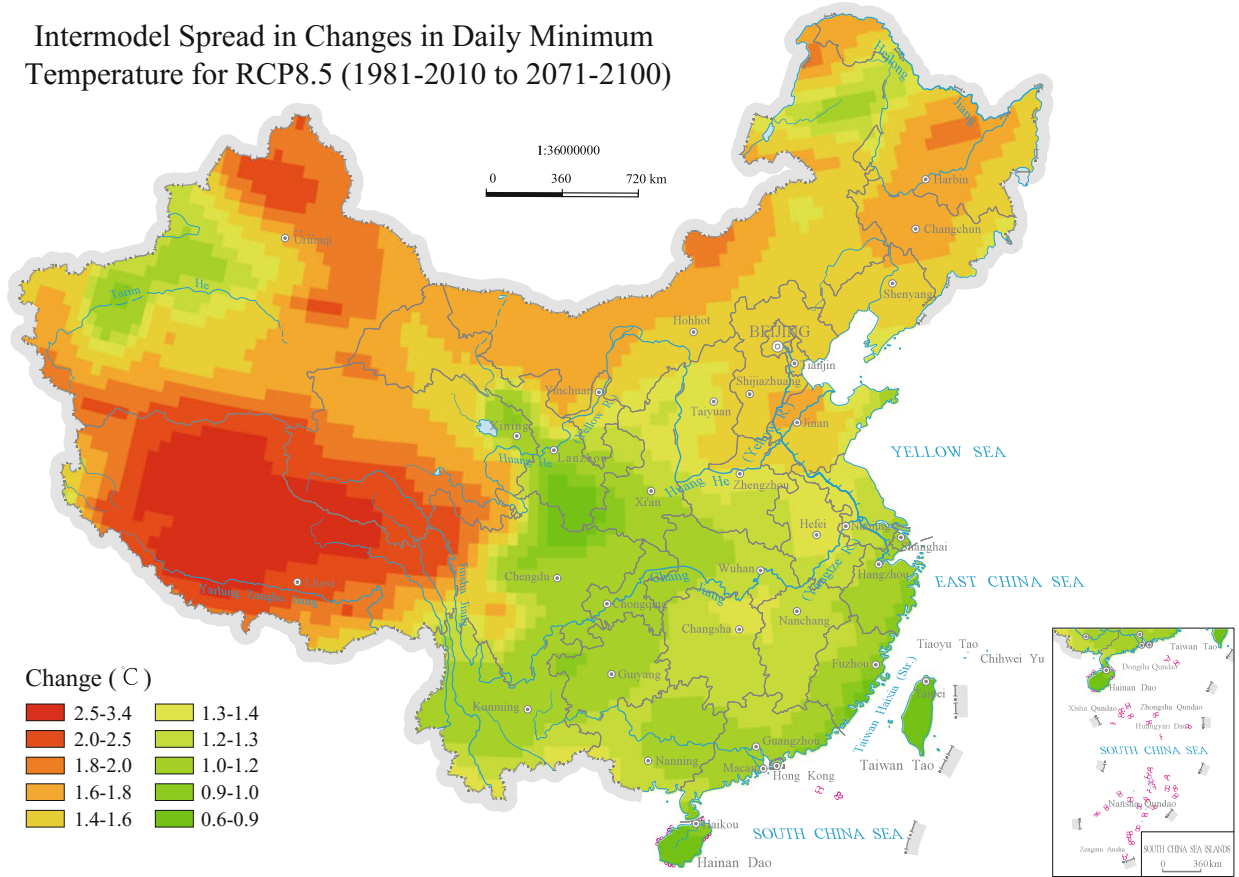
Change in Mean Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



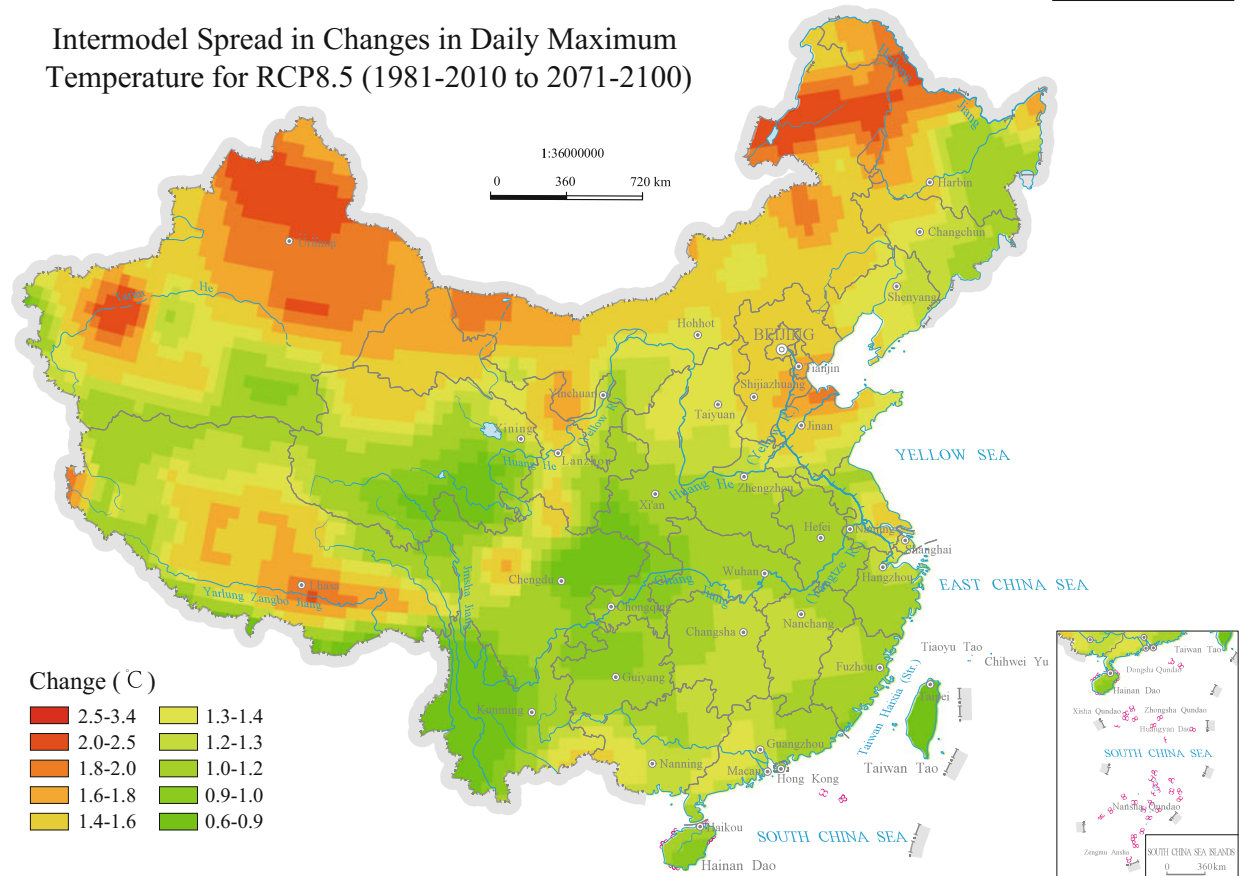
Change in Annual Precipitation for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



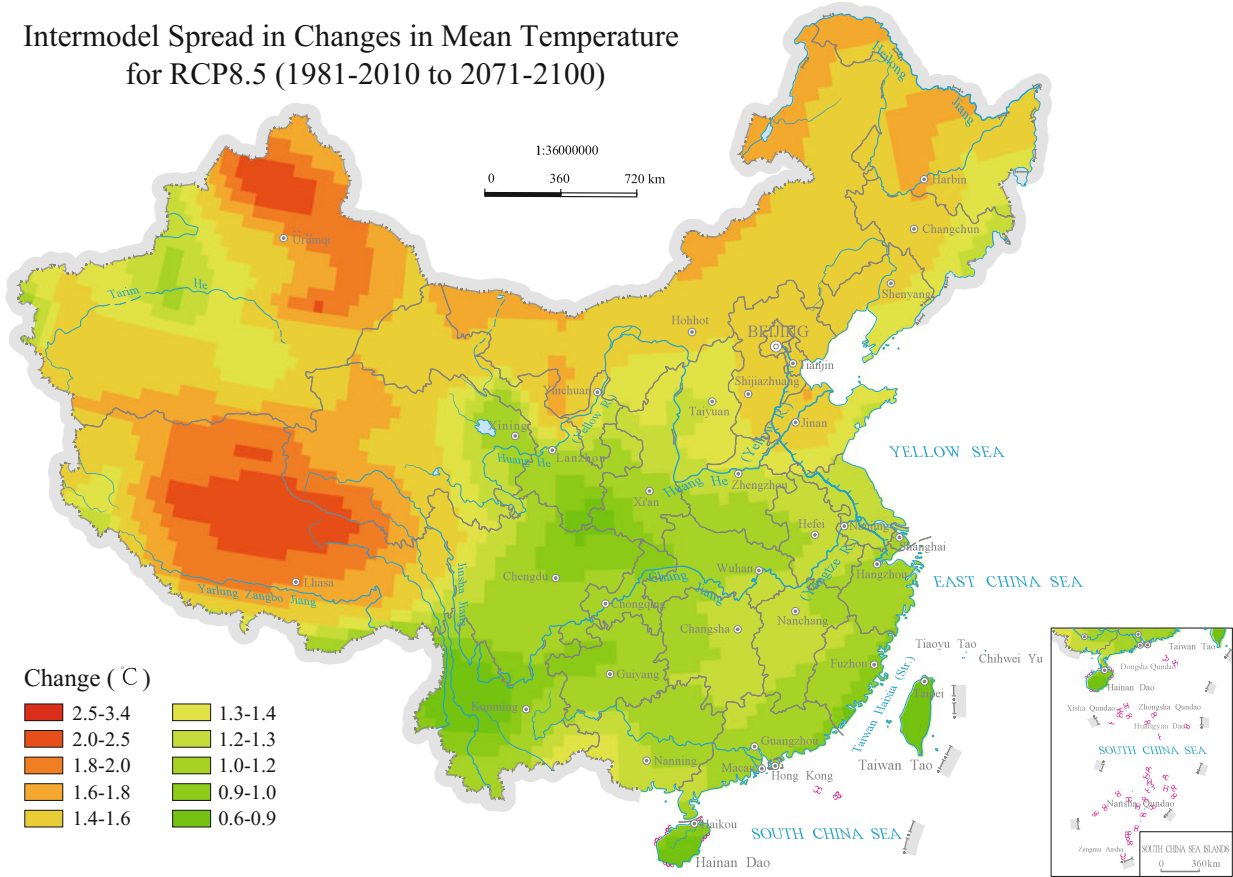
Intermodel Spread in Changes in Daily Minimum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



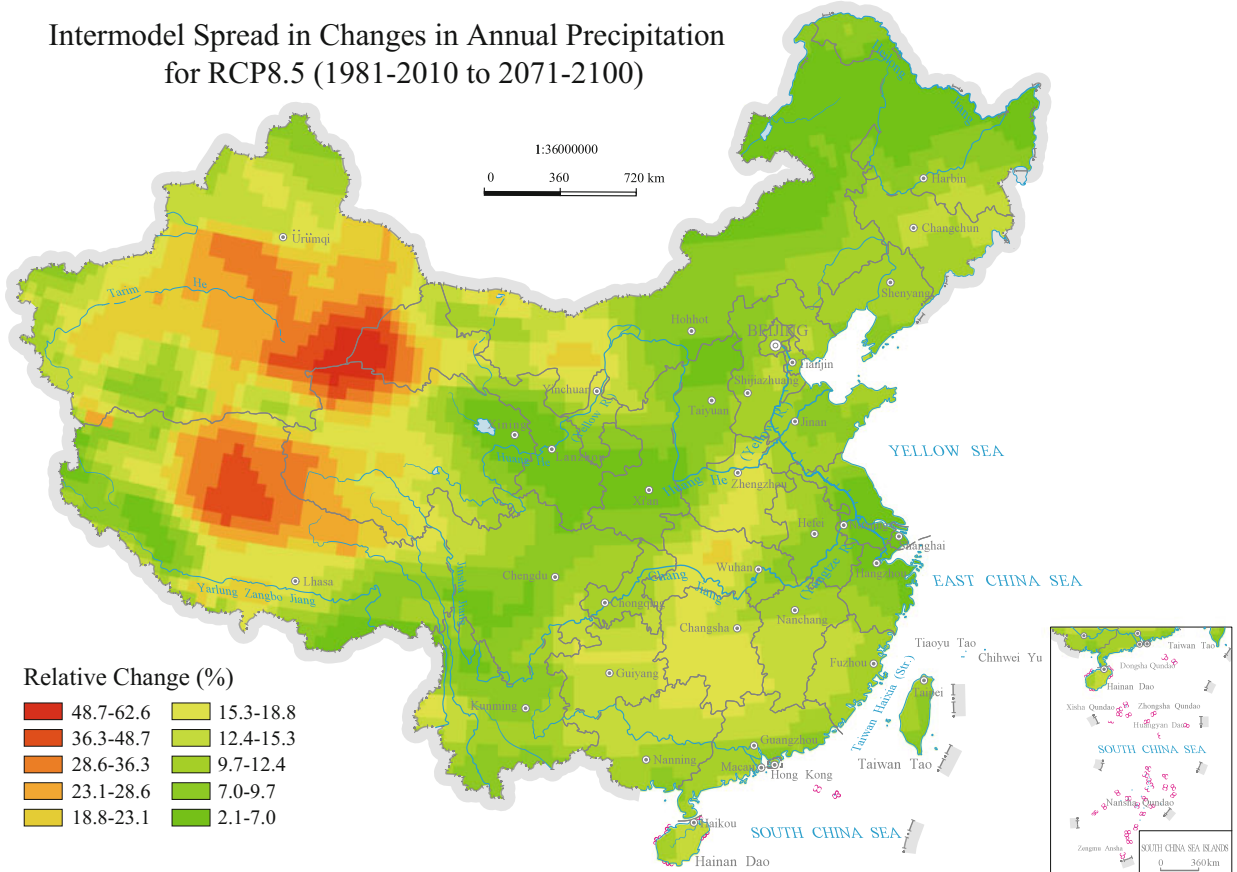
Intermodel Spread in Changes in Daily Maximum Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



Intermodel Spread in Changes in Mean Temperature for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



Intermodel Spread in Changes in Annual Precipitation for RCP8.5 (1981-2010 to 2071-2100)



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