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Environmental Performance Reviews

TURKMENISTAN - 2012

highlights

Despite the post-2008 global economic downturn Turkmenistan's economy has been growing since 1998. The rate of growth diminished in 2009 but remained very strong at 6.1 per cent. The Turkmen Government reported real GDP growth of 9.2 per cent in 2010. Agricultural production's share of GDP was halved between 2001 and 2009, while the share of construction shot up in 2009 because of investment in both hydrocarbons and the housing sector.

According to official reports, Turkmenistan's budgetary performance remains strong. At the same time, however, Turkmenistan is dependent on its hydrocarbon exports. In 2001, gas brought in 57 per cent and crude and refined oil 26 per cent of the country's export income. This source of revenue was significantly affected due to the fact that gas exports to the Russian Federation were halted during most of 2009 owing to a dispute over pricing and volumes, and while trade resumed in 2010 the volume was much lower than in 2008.

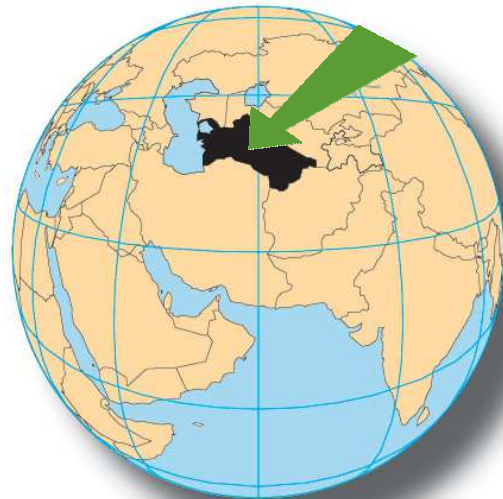
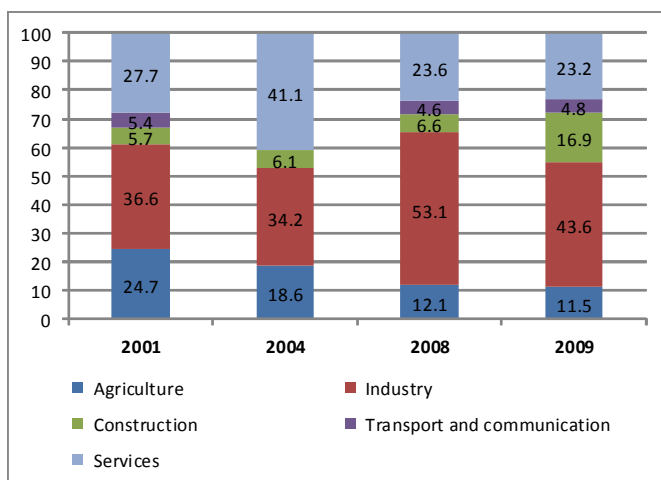


Figure 1: GDP by sector 2001-2009, select years, percentage of total GDP



Source: *Statistical Yearbook 2000-2008, 2009;*
Statistical Yearbook 2000-2009, 2010

The most important change in Turkmenistan's demography is its strong population growth. Over the past 10 years, the country's population has grown about 10 per cent from 4.5 million in 2000 to 5.1 million in 2011. The infant mortality rate fell from 56.1 per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 46.9 in 2010. During this same period, the total fertility rate decreased slightly in 2010 to 2.4, which is higher than the 2007 European Union (EU) average of 1.5. Average life expectancy at birth for women slightly increased from 68.3 years in 2003 to 69.1 years in 2010, while the increase for men was negligible from 60.4 to 60.8 years.

International cooperation

Turkmenistan is currently party to 11 international environmental treaties and is making efforts to bring its legislation in line with its international obligations.

There has been a significant level of involvement by Turkmenistan with the international environmental community in activities related to biodiversity, nature conservation and

desertification. Even though the country still has not acceded to other important environmental agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Turkmenistan plays an important role in Central Asian wildlife conservation strategies due to its many different kinds of ecosystems, which offer a variety of habitats for animals.

Water management deserves a special focus in Turkmenistan's policies, and the country's bilateral and regional cooperation with other Central Asian countries needs to be reinforced. The transboundary nature of the water system and the great strain that has been placed on the water resources of the Central Asian region by intense economic expansion show the need for Turkmenistan to engage in productive dialogue with neighbouring countries.



Ashgabat at the foothills of Kopetdag Mountains

Despite producing a substantial amount of environmental data and information, Turkmenistan does not regularly publish state-of-environment reports.

Environmental information and participation

Air quality monitoring is done manually and the equipment is obsolete. Water monitoring is scattered and uncoordinated. Only 2 out of 16 reservoirs are monitored.

Furthermore, there is very limited environmental data exchange between the governmental bodies involved in monitoring activities in the country. Many data sets and much other information stored by the governmental bodies are not in electronic form and not easily accessible for users, including the general public.

Currently, registered public associations are the only means by which citizens can participate in environmental matters and actions. Furthermore, the laws containing provisions on access to justice are vague and it is unlikely that they are used by citizens.

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Economic instruments for environmental protection

Table 1: Comparison of retail fuel prices in central Asian countries (November 2008)

	US cents per litre	
	Super gasoline	Diesel
Uzbekistan	135	75
Tajikistan	103	100
Kazakhstan	83	72
Kyrgyzstan	80	88
Turkmenistan	22	20

Source: GTZ, *International fuel prices 2009*, p. 34.

Note: The world market price of a litre of crude oil was 61 US cents in 2008. (1 Barrel = 158.99 litres.)

resources.

The pollution prevention is considered a fundamental principle of Government policy, yet pollution charges are much too low to provide incentives for polluters to engage in pollution abatement. Charge rates for the pollution of air and water have not been adjusted for cumulative inflation over the last decade. The level of revenues appears to be largely insufficient for the task of financing environmental expenditures.

Currently, water, electricity up to a certain limit, gas and a significant amount of fuel are free of charge to the population, inhibiting the rationalisation of the use of natural resources. The generous subsidies create perverse incentives for consumers, which leads to excess consumption and a wasteful use of

Lack of metering does not allow effective control over the population's water consumption. Despite the 2008 increase in petrol prices, gasoline and diesel are still heavily subsidized.

Water management

Water management is one of the key issues for Turkmenistan, since almost 90 per cent of its water resources go to irrigation. The inefficient and wasteful irrigation system is one of the most acute water management problems. The extensive use of obsolete irrigation technology, which uses huge amounts of water, has led to salinization of more than 60 per cent of agricultural land.

Currently, there are no incentives to stimulate introduction of modern water saving technologies and practices.

The drainage system is deficient and discharged waters are diverted into the desert without any treatment. Furthermore, the inefficient irrigation induces water logging and the free allocation of water for agricultural use does not provide any incentives for water-saving practices.



Monument to Magtymguly, Ashgabat

of goods measured in million ton kms more than doubled and the transportation of passengers measured in million passenger kms almost tripled.

Permitting procedures are based on obsolete practices and integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) has not been introduced. Furthermore, best available techniques (BAT) have not been defined and, therefore, are not taken into account during the permit issuing procedure. The role of EIA is not clearly defined.

Biodiversity and protected areas

The biodiversity of Turkmenistan has declined significantly due to desertification, land degradation and overexploitation. Turkmenistan's Fourth National Report on implementation of

Table 2: Water supply and sewage tariffs in Turkmenistan

Consumer category	US cents/m ³	
	Water supply	Sewerage
Private households up to 250 l per capita per day	0.00	0.00
Budget organizations	6.00	1.10
State-owned enterprises	8.42	2.80
Domestic private companies	17.50	4.20
Foreign companies	21.10	6.30

Source: GTZ, *International fuel prices 2009*, p. 34.

Note: The world market price of a litre of crude oil was 61 US cents in 2008. (1 Barrel = 158.99 litres.)

Land management

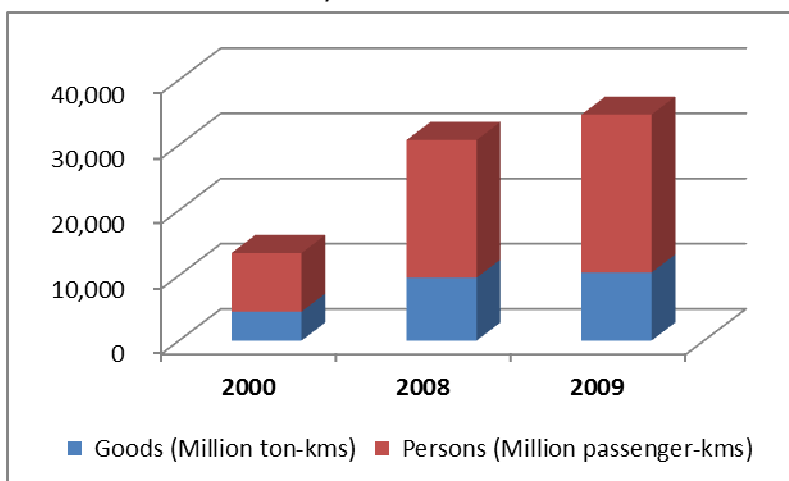
The degradation of vegetative cover of pasture lands, salinization of the irrigated lands and water logging of desert ranges. Soil salinity and water logging has increased in the last decade from roughly 25 to 50 per cent of the irrigated land, resulting in a decline in crop yield of some 25 per cent.

Since 1991, no soil analyses have been performed.

Air quality management

The robust growth of the Turkmen economy together with the rise of transportation demand increases pressure on air quality. Between 2000 and 2009 the transportation

Table 3: Development of road transport demand, 2000, 2008 and 2009



Source: State Statistical Committee

the CBD has highlighted the decline in Turkmenistan of sturgeons, the Caspian seal, and leopards. Four bird species were listed as endangered in the 1999 Red Data Book of Turkmenistan, and others have declined strongly.

Reliable, up-to-date information on the status of and trends in biodiversity is an indispensable prerequisite for proper biodiversity management and decision-making. Yet, the comprehensive, up-to-date assessment of the conservation state of ecosystems and species throughout Turkmenistan is undermined by the incomplete system of biodiversity monitoring. Acceding to a number of key international conventions on biodiversity to which Turkmenistan is not yet a party would strengthen its biodiversity observation efforts.

Turkmenistan's protected areas' (PA) system currently consists of eight State reserves which have a strict protection regime. PAs currently cover approximately 4 per cent of the country's area; 1.6 per cent of the territory is covered by the core State reserves.

However, the system's effectiveness is limited, among other reasons, by its small area of coverage and restricted range of PA categories. Enlarging and diversifying the PA system is an important priority area for action.

The Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Turkmenistan was carried out in 2011-2012. Recommendations to the country were adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Environmental Policy in April 2012.

The EPR Programme assesses country's efforts to reduce its overall pollution burden, manage its natural resources in a sustainable way, integrate environmental and socio-economic policies, and strengthen cooperation with the international community.

The most recent reviews include: Uzbekistan (2010), Georgia (2010), Azerbaijan (2011), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2011) and Tajikistan (2012).



Printed EPR reports may be obtained from the United Nations Publications department at: <https://unp.un.org/>

EPR reports are available online at: <http://www.unece.org/env/epr/>

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