Country and Sector Background

1. Agriculture in Turkmenistan accounts for 25% of GDP and 44% of the labor force (1995) and relies to a large extent on livestock and irrigated crop production. Monoculture of cotton led under the Soviet system to various environmental, agronomic, and public health problems. After independence agricultural production declined. Since 1996, the Government has initiated a gradual agricultural reform process that includes the concept of private farming with long term land leases, slow abolishment of state orders, modernization of farm equipment and services, and the creation farmer associations.

Objectives

2. The project aims to support the Country Assistance Strategy goal of supporting agricultural reforms by maintaining key public services, reducing losses due to pests and diseases, and to support sustainable agricultural development. The project development objectives are to (i) strengthen the (unique) pest control and animal disease control system and its conversion from complete state control to a farmer-responsive system, either operated by farmers and farmer/herder organizations or operated by state or parastatals with adequate cost recovery and private farmer input; (ii) support the development of a regulatory framework and monitoring system supporting sustainable pest and disease control, including the rehabilitation of the unique biocontrol system; (iii) reduce the vulnerability of producers to the risk of plant and animal disease; (iv) improve public health and environmental quality by supporting introduction of superior systems for maintenance of animal health and plant protection.

Description

3. The Crop Protection and Veterinary Services project aims to (re-)build farmer responsive crop protection and veterinary services that are financially and environmentally sustainable. It consists of:
   i. a plant protection component that seeks to strengthen the existing biocontrol system, promote biocontrol practices, farmer worker safety and
pest-reducing agronomic practices among (new) farmers; and help with the introduction and evaluation of technologies that promote sustainable crop production;

ii. a veterinary services component that will provide support for the control of epizootic and zoonotic disease by the provision of essential vaccines and drugs, by strengthening and modernizing the diagnostic ability, and providing assistance in the cost recovery and future privatization of veterinary services;

iii. a regulatory and quality control component that will assist in the modernization of a residue detection system, and in the development of a framework for the regulation of animal drugs and pesticides.

Financing

4. The estimated total project cost is $20-30 million of which the IBRD may finance up to $15 million.

Implementation

5. The project is to be implemented through a project implementation unit associated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Sustainability

6. The project aims to support an appropriate policy and institutional framework that encourages technically and environmentally sustainable pest and disease control, ultimately financed by farmers and farmer associations.

Lessons learned from past operations in the country/sector

7. This is the World Bank’s first agriculture related operation in Turkmenistan. Early project experiences in other sectors indicate a need for carefully designed and supervised implementation. Support services in crop pest control, as well as in animal disease are a shared responsibility of the public and the private sector, with appropriate oversight on quality control by public sector, and with oversight of public sector agencies.

Poverty Category

8. Not applicable.

Environmental Aspects

9. The project is supporting the development of sustainable pest and disease control system. A need for mitigation is not envisaged. Training in sustainable pest identification/diagnosis as well as in residue detection etc. control will encourage farmers to use sustainable control methods. Indirectly, the project may have to deal with/advice on policy and use of pesticides. The use of these will not directly be supported by the project. In order to reduce public and environmental risks project supported activities may include advising the new farmers on appropriate use of pesticides, drugs and the relevant application equipment. A category B has been assigned.

Program Objective Categories

10. The project is classified under the category of natural resources management, and complements the Bank’s program to enhance development of the private sector.

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Note: This is information on an evolving project. Certain activities and/or components may not be included in the final project.

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Annex

Because this is a Category B project, it may be required that the borrower prepare a separate EA report. If a separate EA report is required, once it is prepared and submitted to the Bank, in accordance with OP 4.01, Environmental Assessment, it will be filed as an annex to the Public Information Document (PID).

If no separate EA report is required, the PID will not contain an EA annex; the findings and recommendations of the EA will be reflected in the body of the PID.