

BP Statistical Review 2016

China's energy market in 2015

Despite slowing economic activity and changing economic structure, China still maintains its role as the world's largest energy consumer, producer and net importer.

Fast facts

1. China accounted for 23% of global energy consumption and 34% of net energy consumption growth.
2. China became the world's top generator of solar energy, overtaking both Germany and the US.
3. China's CO₂ emissions from energy use declined by 0.1% in 2015, the first decline in emissions since 1998.

+1.5%

Growth in China's energy consumption

-1.5%

Decline in China's coal consumption

+69.7%

Growth in China's solar power production

-2.0%

Decline in China's coal production

- China's energy consumption grew by 1.5% in 2015. This was less than one-third of the 10-year average growth rate of 5.3% and the slowest annual rate of growth since 1998.
- China remained the world's largest energy consumer and accounted for 23% of global energy consumption and 34% of net global energy growth.
- Among the fossil fuels, consumption growth was led by oil (+6.3%), and by natural gas (+4.7%), while coal use declined (-1.5%). Oil growth was slightly above its 10-year average, while gas and coal growth was significantly below trend.
- China's energy mix continues to evolve. While coal remains the dominant fuel, accounting for 64% of China's energy consumption, this was the lowest share on record and down from recent highs of 74% in the mid-2000s.
- China overtook Germany and the US to become the world's top generator of solar power, accounting for 16% of the world's total.
- Coal production fell by 2%, compared to the 10-year average growth of 3.9%. This was the second fall in coal production in China since 1998. Production of other fossil fuels grew: natural gas by 4.8% and oil by 1.5%.
- Among non-fossil fuels solar grew the fastest (+69.7%), followed by nuclear (+28.9%) and wind (+15.8%). Hydro grew by 5% in 2015, the slowest pace since 2012.
- Renewables grew by 20.9% in 2015. Chinese renewables now account for 17% of the global total, up from 2% just ten years ago.
- Nuclear power grew by 28.9%, more than doubling the 10-year average of 12.4%.
- China's net oil imports increased by 9.6% to 7.4 Mb/d, the highest in its history.
- China's CO₂ emissions from energy use declined by 0.1% in 2015. This was the first decline in emissions since 1998. It is well below the 10-year average of 4.2% and lower than the 2015 global growth rate of 0.1%.