**External Merchandise Trade Statistics – 2nd Quarter 2023**

# **Introduction**

 This issue of Economic and Social Indicators presents external merchandise trade statistics for the first and second quarters of 2023 and the years 2021 and 2022. These statistics are compiled from declarations lodged at the Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), by importers and exporters. Some of these declarations are usually revised at a later period and corrections are made accordingly on the computerised database of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA).

Thus, while revised figures for 2021 are published in this indicator, those for 2023 are still provisional and subject to revision as and when the Customs Department of the MRA submits latest amendments to Statistics Mauritius.

Data on external merchandise trade are compiled as per the recommendations of the United Nations General Trade System. According to this system, all goods entering and leaving the national frontier, including trading activities of the Freeport zone should be accounted for.

1. **Total value of trade and trade balance**

Total external merchandise trade for the second quarter of 2023 was valued at Rs 97,821 million, i.e. 7.5% higher than the value of Rs 91,021 million of the previous quarter and 5.0% lower than the value of Rs 102,962 million of the corresponding quarter of 2022.

For the second quarter of 2023, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers[[1]](#footnote-1)) were valued at Rs 25,176 million against total imports of Rs 72,645 million. In the first quarter of 2023, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores and bunkers) amounted to Rs 25,379 million against total imports of Rs 65,642 million while for the second quarter of 2022, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) amounted to Rs 27,428 million against total imports of Rs 75,534 million. Compared to the previous quarter, total exports and total imports in the second quarter of 2023 were lower by 0.1% and higher by 10.7% respectively. While compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total exports and total imports were down by 8.2% and 3.8% respectively.

The resulting trade deficit for the second quarter of 2023 worked out to Rs 47,469 million, 17.9% higher than the deficit of Rs 40,263 million of the previous quarter and 1.3% lower than the deficit of Rs 48,106 million of the corresponding quarter of 2022.



Compared to the first semester of 2022, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) rose from Rs 49,516 million to Rs 50,555 million in the first semester of 2023, showing an increase of around 2.1% (Fig 1). Total imports went up from Rs 137,443 million in first semester of 2022 to Rs 138,287 million in the first semester of 2023, representing an increase of 0.6%. Consequently, the trade deficit for first semester of 2023 worked out to around Rs 87,732 million, 0.2% lower than the deficit of Rs 87,927 million in the first semester of 2022.

1. **Total Exports**

**3.1 Total exports (Tables 1 & 3) – 2nd Quarter & 1st Semester 2023**

Total exports proceed for the second quarter of 2023, including domestic exports[[2]](#footnote-2),re-exports[[3]](#footnote-3) and ship’s stores and bunkers amounted to Rs 25,176 million, showing a decrease of 0.8% compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (-31.5%) and “Food and live animals” (-6.9%), partly offset by a increases in the exports of “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s” (+18.1%), “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s” (+18.1%), “Ships’ stores & bunkers” (+6.7%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+5.9%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+2.4%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, total exports for the second quarter of 2023 decreased by 8.2%. This is mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Ships’ stores & bunkers” (-34.3%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-15.2%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-5.9%), partly offset by increases in the exports of “Chemicals and related products” (+15.8%), “Food and live animals” (+13.8%) and “Machinery and transport equipment” (+1.9%).

Compared to corresponding semester of 2022, total exports for the first semester of 2023, increased by 2.1%, which is mainly explained by increases in exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (+54.3%), “Food and live animals” (+27.9%) and “Chemicals and related products” (+4.2%), partly offset by decreases in the exports of “Ships’ stores & bunkers” (-22.0%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-11.3%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-3.7%).

Domestic exports, amounting to Rs 14,667 million, accounted for 58.3% of total exports in the second quarter of 2023. Compared to a value of Rs 15,309 million recorded in the first quarter of 2023, domestic exports decreased by 4.2%. This is mainly explained by decreases in domestic exports of “Food and live animals” (-11.0%) and “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (-1.7%), partly offset by increases in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+7.0%), “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (+3.7%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+2.6%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, domestic exports for the second quarter of 2023 were lower by 1.2%, mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-15.7%), “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (-13.5%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-9.5%) and “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (-8.1%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Food and live animals” (+13.5%).

Compared to the corresponding semester of 2022, domestic exports for the first semester of 2022 were higher by 7.4%. This rise was mainly due to increases in the exports of “Food and live animals” (+29.6%) and “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (+3.3%), partly offset by decreases in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-13.5%), “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (-6.6%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-6.4%) (*Table 4*).

For the second quarter of 2023, re-exports stood at Rs 5,929 million, i.e. higher by 2.6% compared to the previous quarter, mainly due to increases in exports of “Food and live animals” (+34.5%), “Chemicals and related products”(+24.8%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+19.3%), partly offset by decreases in the exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (-30.2%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-4.3%) (*Table 5*).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, re-exports for second quarter of 2023 for merchandise goods rose by 5.8%, mainly explained by increases in re-exports “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (+28.8%), “Food and live animals” (+16.1%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+9.2%) and “Machinery and transport equipment” (+5.2%), partly offset by a decrease in the re-exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-14.2%).

Compared to the corresponding semester of 2022, re-exports increased by 14.5% in the first semester of 2023. This increase was mainly due to a rise in “Machinery and transport equipment” (+59.8%), “Food and live animals” (+15.5%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+7.8%) and “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (+4.6%), partly offset by a decrease in “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-7.4%).

**3.2 Exports of Export Oriented Enterprises (EOE) – 2nd Quarter & 1st Semester 2023**

For the second quarter of 2023, exports of EOE amounted to Rs 11,988 million, compared to Rs 11,996 million in the previous quarter (-0.1%) and to Rs 12,503 million in the corresponding quarter of 2022 (-4.1%) (*Table 1*).

Compared to the first semester of 2022, exports of EOE increased by 2.4%, from
Rs 23,428 million to Rs 23,984 million in the first semester of 2023.

Further details on these transactions will be presented in the issue of the Economic and Social Indicator on Export Oriented Enterprises, to be released on 29 September 2023.

**3.3 Exports by country of destination (Table 7) – 2nd Quarter & 1st Semester 2023**

Analysis of exports figures by country of destination for the second quarter of 2023 showed that the European countries were our main buyers, purchasing some 45.7% of our exports for a value of Rs 9,415 million. Among countries, the major destinations for our exports were France (10.6%), South Africa (10.1%), U.S.A. (9.1%), United Kingdom (8.8%), Spain (7.2%), Madagascar (6.7%), Italy (6.4%) and Reunion (4.0%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, changes in exports to main markets were Italy (+107.3%), Spain (+37.4%), Reunion (+14.4%), U.S.A. (+11.2%), France (+11.1%), Madagascar (-31.6%), South Africa (-17.2%) and United Kingdom (-7.0%).



From Figure 2, compared to the corresponding semester of 2022, changes in exports to main markets in the first semester of 2023 were Italy (+78.8%), Spain (+45.8%), Netherlands (+38.8%), France (+13.7%), U.S.A. (+9.6%), United Kingdom (+7.6%), Madagascar
(-23.9%) and South Africa (-14.1%).

**4. Total Imports**

**4.1 Total imports (Table 10) – 2nd Quarter & 1st Semester 2023**

Total imports for the second quarter of 2023 amounted to Rs 72,645 million, showing an increase of 10.7%, compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly due to increases in imports of “Beverages and tobacco” (+94.2%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+23.1%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (+22.1%), “Food and live animals” (+13.3%), “Chemicals and related products” (+9.0%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+8.9%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials” (-12.1%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total imports for the second quarter of 2023 decreased by 3.8%. This is mainly due to decreases in imports of “Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials” (-37.2%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-16.3%), “Chemicals and related products” (-2.9%), partly offset by increases in the imports of “Beverages and tobacco” (+116.4%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (+34.0%), “Food and live animals” (+10.9%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+4.9%).

Compared to the corresponding semester of 2022, total imports increased by 0.6% in the first semester of 2023. This rise was mainly explained by increases in the imports of “Beverages and tobacco” (+77.0%), “Machinery & transport equipment” (+24.0%), “Food and live animals” (+9.1%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+3.6%) and “Chemicals and related products” (+0.1%), partly offset by decreases in the imports of “Mineral fuels, lubricants, & related products” (-18.1%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-13.4%).

**4.2 Imports by SITC section (Table 10) – 2nd Quarter 2023**

Around 24.1% of imports in the second quarter of 2023 consisted of “Machinery and transport equipment” (Rs 17,486 million), 18.8% of “Food and live animals” (Rs 13,657 million), 18.7% of “Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials” (Rs 13,570 million), 13.4% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (Rs 9,726 million), 9.2% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (Rs 6,706 million) and 8.2% of “Chemicals and related products” (Rs 5,965 million).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total imports for the second quarter 2023 decreased by 3.8%. Main changes by section are as follows:

* “Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials” decreased by 37.2%, mainly due to a decrease in the imports of “Refined petroleum products” (-39.2%).
* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” decreased by 16.3%, mainly due to decreases in the imports of “Textile yarn” (-49.9%), “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones (-20.7%), “Paper, paperboard & articles thereof” (-18.3%), “Cement” (-19.7%), “Iron and Steel (-11.9%), “Other textile fabrics” (-10.1%) and “Manufactures of metal, n.e.s” (-1.5%).
* “Machinery and transport equipment” increased by 34.0%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Road vehicles” (+70.4%), “General industrial machinery & equipment, n.e.s., & machine parts, n.e.s” (+34.8%), “Electrical machinery, apparatus & appliances, n.e.s., & electrical parts of household type” (+23.7%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Telecommunications & sound recording & reproducing apparatus & equipment” (-4.1%).
* “Food and live animals” increased by 10.9%, mainly due to increases in the imports “Fish and fish preparations” (+24.6%), partly offset by decreases in the imports of “Dairy products and bird’s eggs” (-21.8%) and “Vegetables and fruits” (-6.0%).
* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” increased by 4.9%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Watches and clocks & optical goods” (+20.3%), “Footwear” (+10.1%), “Articles n.e.s, of plastic” (+2.1%), “Articles of apparel and clothing” (+0.2%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Professional, scientific & controlling instruments & apparatus, n.e.s” (-1.0%) and “Jewellery, goldsmiths’& silversmith’s wares, n.e.s” (-35.5%).
	1. **Imports by country of origin – 2nd Quarter & 1st Semester 2023**

During the second quarter of 2023, our imports originated from five main countries, namely: China (15.5%), U.A.E. (12.5%), India (7.9%), South Africa (7.1%) and France (5.6%)
(*Table 13*). Among continents Asia was our main supplier with a share of Rs 37,283 million, representing 51.3% of total imports.

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total imports from India, South Africa, U.A.E. and France declined by 47.1%, 17.5%, 13.8% and 3.8% respectively, while imports from China rose by 6.1%.



From Figure 3, compared to the corresponding semester of 2022, total imports for the first semester of 2023 from U.A.E and France have witnessed increases of 28.2% and 13.8% respectively, while imports from South Africa, India and China declined by 29.7%, 25.0% and 4.2% respectively.

**5. Trade with Member States of Regional Organizations – 2nd Quarter 2023**

During the second quarter of 2023, total exports to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States stood at Rs 4,810 million against imports of Rs 8,625 million (*Table 14*). The trade deficit with ACP countries worked out to Rs 3,815 million. South Africa, was the main buyer and supplier with shares of 43.3% and 59.8%, respectively.

Exports for the second quarter of 2023 to COMESA member states attained Rs 2,007 million while imports from these countries amounted to around Rs 3,486 million, resulting in a trade deficit of Rs 1,479 million.

Madagascar was the main buyer with a share of 69.2%, followed by Seychelles (15.9%). Our main suppliers were Kenya (37.1%), Seychelles (28.7%) and Madagascar (19.1%) (*Table 15*).

Trade with SADC countries showed a deficit of Rs 2,934 million, resulting from imports of Rs 6,916 million against exports worth Rs 3,982 million for the second quarter of 2023. The main suppliers were South Africa (74.5%) and Seychelles (14.4%) and our main buyers were South Africa (52.3%) and Madagascar (34.9%) (*Table 16*).

**6. Trade in Freeport Zone – 2nd Quarter 2023**

During the second quarter of 2023, total imports of the Freeport Zone stood at
Rs 2,567 million, lower by 24.1% compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022 and higher by 4.4% compared to the previous quarter – (*Table 12*). Compared to corresponding semester of 2022, freeport imports fell by 23.8% and for this period, the main items imported were “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s. (27.0%), “Food and live animals” (20.7%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (20.2%).

Re-exports for the second quarter of 2023 were valued at Rs 3,668 million, representing an increase of 18.9% compared to the corresponding period of 2022 (*Table 6*). Compared to the corresponding semester of 2022, an increase of 19.0% was recorded in the first semester of 2023, mainly explained by increases in the re-exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (+109.8%), “Chemicals and related products” (+25.6%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+19.0%).

**7. Forecast 2023**

Based on trends and information from various sources, the forecast for year 2023 for total exports has been maintained at the previous forecast figures while that for total imports has been revised downwards.

Total exports for 2023 will be around Rs 110 billion, 3.8% higher than the total exports of around Rs 106 billion in 2022. Total imports for 2023, including one-off items such as machinery for metro terminals, will be around Rs 315 billion, 7.9% higher than the total imports of around Rs 292 billion in 2022.

The trade deficit for 2023 is forecasted at around Rs 205 billion, 9.6% higher as compared to around Rs 187 billion in 2022.

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**Notes**

**(1)** **Scope and coverage**

**External merchandise trade statistics** are compiled according to the General Trade System as recommended by the United Nations. Using the national boundary as the statistical frontier, the General Trade System is a record of all goods entering (imports) and leaving the country (exports).

**Imports** include goods brought in directly for domestic consumption plus goods imported into customs bonded warehouses.

**Exports** cover:

* Domestic exports defined as goods of national origin, that is goods produced in the exporting country.
* Re-exports which are exported in the same condition as imported or after undergoing minor operations which leave them essentially unchanged and include re-exports from customs bonded warehouses.
* Ship’s Stores and Bunkers (SSB)are included in total exports and are shown separately.

Trade by parcel post is also included in imports and exports.

**(2)** **Valuation**

**Imports** are valued on a C.I.F. (Cost, Insurance and Freight) basis, whilst exports on a F.O.B. (Free on Board) basis.

**Cost, Insurance and Freight** (C.I.F) value is the value of a country's imports of goods, including all charges for transporting and insuring the goods from the country of exports to the given country but excluding the cost of unloading from the ship, aircraft unless it is borne by the carrier.

**Free on Board** (F.O.B) value is the value of a country's exports of goods, including all costs of transporting the goods to the customs frontier, export duties.

**(3) Classification of commodities**

Commodities are coded according to the **Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System Nomenclature (HS 2017)**. However, for the purposes of economic analysis and to facilitate international comparison of trade by commodity data, the commodities are also classified according to **the Standard International Trade Classification (Revision 4) (SITC Rev. 4)**. The HS and the SITC Rev. 4 are six- and five-digit codes respectively but have been extended to eight and seven digits to accommodate national requirements.

**(4)** **Symbols used**

 - Nil or negligible

 -. - Not applicable

 ... Not available

1. Ships stores and bunkers, which consist of jet fuel and victuals supplied to foreign vessels and aircraft, are included in total exports and are shown separately [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Domestic exports are defined as goods of national origin. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Re-exports are goods which are exported in the same condition as imported or after undergoing minor operations which leave them essentially unchanged.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)