## **External Merchandise Trade Statistics – 1st Quarter 2023**

# **Introduction**

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

Thus, while revised figures for 2022 are published in this indicator, those for 2023 are still provisional and will be revised, as and when latest amendments are obtained from the Customs Department of the MRA.

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 first quarter of 2023 was valued at Rs 90,802 million, i.e. 14.3% lower than the value of Rs 105,923 million of the previous quarter and 8.1% higher than the value of Rs 83,997 million of the corresponding quarter of 2022.

For the first quarter of 2023, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) were valued at Rs 25,160 million against total imports of Rs 65,642 million. In the previous quarter, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores and bunkers) amounted to   
Rs 28,269 million against total imports of Rs 77,654 million while for the corresponding quarter of 2022, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) amounted to   
Rs 22,088 million against total imports of Rs 61,909 million. In the first quarter of 2023, total exports and total imports were lower by 11.0% and 15.5% respectively compared to the previous quarter. Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total exports and total imports were higher by 13.9% and 6.0% respectively.

The resulting trade deficit for the first quarter of 2023 worked out to Rs 40,482 million, 18.0% lower than the deficit of Rs 49,385 million of the previous quarter and 1.7% higher than the deficit of Rs 39,821 million of the corresponding quarter of 2022.



1. **Exports**

**3.1 Total exports – 1st Quarter 2023**

For the first quarter of 2023, total exports proceeds, including domestic exports1,re-exports2 and ship’s stores and bunkers amounted to Rs 25,160 million, showing a decrease of 11.0% compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Ship’s Stores and Bunkers” (-26.0%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-13.6%). “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-11.1%) and “Food and live animals” (-2.1%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (+57.3%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total exports for the first quarter of 2023 increased by 13.9%. This is mainly explained by increases in exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (+138.2%)”and “Food and live animals” (+44.4%), partly offset by decreases in the exports of “Ship’s Stores and Bunkers” (-7.6%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-6.8%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-1.2%).

For the first quarter of 2023, domestic exports amounted to Rs 15,309 million, accounting for 60.8% of total exports proceeds. Compared to the previous quarter, domestic exports which amounted to Rs 16,620 million, showed a decrease of 7.9%. This is mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-12.2%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-7.8%) and “Food and live animals” (-0.8%) (*Table 4)*.

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, domestic exports were higher by 17.2%, mainly explained by increases in the exports of “Food and live animals” (+48.3%) and “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (+1.2%), partly offset by decreases in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-11.0%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-2.9%) (*Table 4).*

For the first quarter of 2023, re-exports stood at Rs 5,778 million, i.e. lower by 6.0% compared to the previous quarter, mainly due to decreases in exports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-19.0%), Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-15.4%) and “Food and live animals” (-13.5%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (+60.5%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, re-exports were higher by 25.0%, mainly due to increases in the exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (+150.5%), “Food and live animals” (+14.8%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+6.3%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+0.3%) (*Table 5).*

**3.2 Exports by SITC section (Tables 1 & 3) – 1st Quarter 2023**

Around 33.3% of total exports for the first quarter of 2023 consisted of “Food and live animals” (Rs 8,389 million), 25.2% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (Rs 6,340 million), 16.2% of “Ship’s Stores & Bunkers” (Rs 4,073 million) and 10.9% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (Rs 2,751 million).

1 Domestic exports are defined as goods of national origin

2 Re-exports are goods which are exported in the same condition as imported or after undergoing minor operations which leave them essentially unchanged.

Compared to the first quarter of 2022, the main changes by section were as follows:

* “Food and live animals” increased by 44.4%, mainly due to increases in the exports of “Live Primates” (+69.8%), “Cane Sugar” (+56.3%) and “Fish and fish preparations” (+40.1%).
* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” decreased by 6.8%, mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Textile yarns, fabrics, made up articles” (-16.4%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones” (+7.5%).
* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” registered a decrease of 1.2%, mainly due to a decrease in the exports of “Articles of apparel and clothing accessories” (-5.4%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Instruments and appliances, n.e.s for medical, surgical, dental or veterinary purposes” (+20.1%).

**3.3 Exports of Export Oriented Enterprises (EOE) – 1st Quarter 2023**

For the first quarter of 2023, exports of EOE amounted to Rs 11,996 million, compared to   
Rs 10,925 million for the corresponding quarter of 2022 (*Table 1*). 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 June 2023.

**3.4 Exports by country of destination (Table 7) – 1st Quarter 2023**

Analysis of exports figures by country of destination for the first quarter of 2023 showed that the European countries were our main buyers, purchasing some 46.4% of our exports excluding ship’s stores and bunkers, for a value of Rs 9,791 million. Among countries, the major destinations for our exports were South Africa (10.4%), U.K (9.5%), France (9.1%), U.S.A (7.7%), Spain (6.6%), Madagascar (6.4%), Netherlands (5.5%) and Italy (5.4%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, exports to Netherlands, Spain, Italy, U.K, France and U.S.A went up by 100.9%, 56.0%, 54.2%, 25.5%, 16.8% and 7.9% respectively. On the other hand, exports to Madagascar & South Africa dropped by 13.7% and 11.0% respectively.



**4. Imports**

**4.1 Total imports (Table 10) – 1st Quarter 2023**

Total imports for the first quarter of 2023 amounted to Rs 65,642 million, showing a decrease of 15.5% compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly due to decreases in the imports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-29.5%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-20.9%), “Food and live animals” (-17.9%), “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (-14.1%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (-12.5%) and “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (-3.9%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total imports for the first quarter of 2023 increased by 6.0%. This is mainly due to increases in imports of “Machinery & transport equipment” (+13.7%), “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (+11.7%), “Food and live animals” (+7.2%), “Chemicals and related products n.e.s” (+3.6%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+2.0%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-10.1%).

**4.2 Imports by SITC section (Table 10) – 1st Quarter 2023**

Around 23.5% of imports in the first quarter of 2023 consisted of “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (Rs 15,433 million), 21.8% of “Machinery & transport equipment” (Rs 14,326 million), 18.4% of “Food and live animals” (Rs 12,050 million), 13.6% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (Rs 8,931 million), 8.3% of “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (Rs 5,472 million) and 8.3% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (Rs 5,446 million).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022, total imports increased by 6.0%. Main changes by section were as follows:

* “Machinery and transport equipment” increased by 13.7%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Road vehicles” (+22.1%), “General industrial machinery & equipment, n.e.s., & machine parts, n.e.s” (+6.7%), “Telecommunications & sound recording & reproducing apparatus & equipment” (+6.3%) and “Electrical machinery, apparatus & appliances, n.e.s., & electrical parts of household type” (+5.7%).
* “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” increased by 11.7%, mainly due to an increase of 36.6% in the imports of “Refined petroleum products”.
* “Food and live animals” increased by 7.2%, mainly due to higher imports of “Vegetables and fruits” (+17.2%), “Fish and fish preparations” (+12.6%) and “Dairy products and bird’s eggs” (+10.7%).
* “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” increased by 3.6%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Plastics in non-primary forms” (+6.0%) and “Medicinal & pharmaceutical products” (+5.5%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Plastics in primary forms” (-6.3%).
* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” increased by 2.0%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Professional, scientific & controlling instruments & apparatus, n.e.s” (+24.5%) and “Articles n.e.s, of plastic” (+9.7%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Articles of apparel and clothing” (-2.1%).
* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” decreased by 10.1%, mainly due to decreases in the imports of “Iron and Steel” (-28.8%), “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones” (-16.4%) and “Manufactures of metals, n.e.s” (-11.0%), partly offset by an increase in the imports of “Textile yarn” (+5.0%).
  1. **Imports by country of origin (Table 13) – 1st Quarter 2023**

During the first quarter of 2023, our imports originated from five main countries, namely: U.A.E (20.2%), China (14.0%), India (8.5%), South Africa (6.9%) and France (6.6%). Among continents, Asia was our main supplier with a share of Rs 36,387 million, representing 55.4% of total imports followed by Europe, with a share of Rs 16,056 million, representing 24.5% of total imports and Africa, with a share of Rs 7,973 million, representing 12.1% of total imports.

Compared to the corresponding period of 2022, total imports from United Arab Emirates, France and India rose by 92.8%, 37.3% and 32.0% respectively, while imports from South Africa and China decreased by 39.8% and 14.5% respectively.



**5. Trade with Member States of Regional Organisations – 1st Quarter 2023**

For the first quarter of 2023, exports1 to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States stood at Rs 5,290 million against total imports of Rs 7,152 million. The trade deficit with ACP countries worked out to Rs 1,862 million. South Africa was the main supplier with a value of Rs 4,543 million, representing 63.5% of the total imports from ACP states as well as the main buyer with a value of Rs 2,184 million, representing 41.3% of the exports1 to ACP states (*Table 14*).

1 Excluding ship’s stores and bunkers

Exports to COMESA member states for the first quarter of 2023 attained Rs 2,056 million, while total imports from these countries amounted to Rs 2,624 million, resulting in a trade deficit of Rs 568 million. Madagascar was the main buyer with a share of 65.4% followed by Kenya (14.4%). The main suppliers were Seychelles (32.0%), Egypt (21.3%), Kenya (20.4%) and Madagascar (20.2%) (*Table 15*).

Trade with SADC countries showed a deficit of Rs 1,826 million, as a result of total imports of Rs 6,183 million against exports worth Rs 4,357 million. The main supplier was South Africa (73.5%) and main buyers were South Africa (50.1%) and Madagascar (30.9%)  
(*Table 16*).

**6. Trade in Freeport Zone – 1st Quarter 2023**

During the first quarter of 2023, total imports of the Freeport Zone stood at   
Rs 2,458 million, lower by 23.6% compared to the corresponding quarter of 2022   
(*Table 12*). The main items imported were “Food and live animals” (27.9%) and “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (22.8%).

Re-exports were valued at Rs 3,380 million, representing an increase of 19.0% compared to the corresponding period of 2022 (*Table 6*). The main items re-exported were “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (31.6%) and “Food and live animals” (19.9%).

**7. Forecast 2023**

Based on trends and information from various sources, the forecast of 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 320 billion, 9.6% higher than the total imports of around Rs 292 billion in 2022.

The trade deficit for 2023 is forecasted at around Rs 210 billion, 12.3% 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 2022)**. 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