## **External Merchandise Trade Statistics – 1st Quarter 2024**

# **Introduction**

This issue of Economic and Social Indicators presents external merchandise trade statistics for the first quarter of 2024 and the years 2022 and 2023. 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 2023 are published in this indicator, those for 2024 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 2024 was valued at Rs 93,200 million, i.e. 6.1% lower than the value of Rs 99,250 million of the previous quarter and 2.3% higher than the value of Rs 91,121 million of the corresponding quarter of 2023.

For the first quarter of 2024, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) were valued at Rs 23,359 million against total imports of Rs 69,841 million. In the previous quarter, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores and bunkers) amounted to   
Rs 25,828 million against total imports of Rs 73,422 million while for the corresponding quarter of 2023, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) amounted to   
Rs 25,511 million against total imports of Rs 65,610 million. In the first quarter of 2024, total exports and total imports were lower by 9.6% and 4.9% respectively compared to the previous quarter. Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, total exports and total imports were lower by 8.4% and higher by 6.4% respectively.

The resulting trade deficit for the first quarter of 2024 worked out to Rs 46,482 million, 2.3% lower than the deficit of Rs 47,594 million of the previous quarter and 15.9% higher than the deficit of Rs 40,099 million of the corresponding quarter of 2023.



1. **Exports**

**3.1 Total exports – 1st Quarter 2024**

For the first quarter of 2024, total exports proceeds, including domestic exports1,re-exports2 and ship’s stores and bunkers amounted to Rs 23,359 million, showing a decrease of 9.6% compared to Rs 25,828 million in the previous quarter. This is mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-22.3%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-10.1%), “Ship’s Stores and Bunkers” (-7.4%) and “Food and live animals” (-4.1%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s. (+4.1%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, total exports for the first quarter of 2024 decreased by 8.4%. This is mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-27.8%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-14.7%) and “Food and live animals” (-4.2%), partly offset by increases in the exports of “Ship’s Stores and Bunkers” (+22.2%) and “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (+13.4%).

For the first quarter of 2024, domestic exports amounted to Rs 13,626 million, accounting for 58.3% of total exports proceeds. Compared to the previous quarter, domestic exports which amounted to Rs 14,667 million, showed a decrease of 7.1%. This is mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (-22.6%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-11.8%) and “Food and live animals” (-3.7%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+2.1%) (*Table 4)*.

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, domestic exports were lower by 10.6%, mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (-21.7%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-17.8%) and “Food and live animals” (-8.4%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+5.7%) (*Table 4).*

For the first quarter of 2024, re-exports stood at Rs 4,235 million, i.e. lower by 18.9% compared to the previous quarter, mainly due to decreases in exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-69.9%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (-27.8%), “Food and live animals” (-6.5%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-3.8%), partly offset by an increase in the re-exports of “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s. (+8.4%)”.

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, re-exports were lower by 26.7%, mainly due to decreases in the exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-76.8%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (-68.0%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-2.2%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Food and live animals” (+37.1%) and “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s..” (+18.7%) (*Table 5).*

**3.2 Exports by SITC section (Tables 1 & 3) – 1st Quarter 2024**

Around 34.3% of total exports for the first quarter of 2024 consisted of “Food and live animals” (Rs 8,019 million), 23.5% of “Ship’s Stores & Bunkers” (Rs 5,498 million), 22.9% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (Rs 5,358 million) and 8.5% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (Rs 1,987 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 2023, the main changes by section were as follows:

* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” decreased by 27.8%, mainly explained by decreases in the exports of “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones” (-77.9%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Textile yarns, fabrics, made up articles” (+17.9%).
* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” registered a decrease of 14.7%, mainly due to a decrease in the exports of “Articles of apparel and clothing accessories” (-18.6%),“Jewellery, goldsmiths' & silversmiths' wares” (-14.3%), “Instruments and appliances, n.e.s for medical, surgical, dental or veterinary purposes” (-13.8%) and “Watches & clocks” (-12.7%).
* “Food and live animals” decreased by 4.2%, mainly due to decreases in the exports of “Fish and fish preparations” (-10.9%) and “Live Primates” (-9.0%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Cane Sugar” (+7.1%).

**3.3 Exports of Export Oriented Enterprises (EOE) – 1st Quarter 2024**

For the first quarter of 2024, exports of EOE amounted to Rs 9,469 million, compared to   
Rs 11,937 million for the corresponding quarter of 2023 (*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 28 June 2024.

**3.4 Exports by country of destination (Table 7) – 1st Quarter 2024**

Analysis of exports figures by country of destination for the first quarter of 2024 showed that the European countries were our main buyers, purchasing some 44.6% of our exports excluding ship’s stores and bunkers, for a value of Rs 7,962 million. Among countries, the major destinations for our exports were Madagascar (11.2%), South Africa (10.0%), France (10.0%), U.S.A (9.5%), U.K (8.9%), Spain (7.3%) and Netherlands (4.8%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, exports to Netherlands, U.K, South Africa, Spain and France dropped by 25.8%, 18.7%, 18.1%, 6.1% and 5.9% respectively. On the other hand, exports to Madagascar & U.S.A increased by 49.0% and 4.5% respectively.



**4. Imports**

**4.1 Total imports (Table 10) – 1st Quarter 2024**

Total imports for the first quarter of 2024 amounted to Rs 69,841 million, showing a decrease of 4.9% compared to Rs 73,422 million in the previous quarter. This is mainly due to decreases in the imports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-21.3%), “Food and live animals” (-15.3%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-14.2%) and “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (-14.0%), partly offset by increases in the imports of “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (+20.9%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, total imports for the first quarter of 2024 increased by 6.4%. This is mainly due to increases in imports of “Machinery & transport equipment” (+20.8%), “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (+12.8%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+9.6%), “Food and live animals” (+3.8%) and “Chemicals and related products n.e.s” (+1.4%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-8.3%).

**4.2 Imports by SITC section (Table 10) – 1st Quarter 2024**

Around 24.9% of imports in the first quarter of 2024 consisted of “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (Rs 17,409 million), 24.8% of “Machinery & transport equipment” (Rs 17,306 million), 17.9% of “Food and live animals” (Rs 12,475 million), 11.7% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (Rs 8,186 million), 8.5% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (Rs 5,970 million) and 7.9% of “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (Rs 5,545 million).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023, total imports increased by 6.4%. Main changes by section were as follows:

* “Machinery and transport equipment” increased by 20.8%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Road vehicles” (+42.4%), “General industrial machinery & equipment, n.e.s., & machine parts, n.e.s” (+22.9%) and “Electrical machinery, apparatus & appliances, n.e.s., & electrical parts of household type” (+20.1%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Telecommunications & sound recording & reproducing apparatus & equipment” (-10.4%) and “Office machines & automatic data processing machines” (-18.8%).
* “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” increased by 12.8%, mainly due to an increase of 12.2% in the imports of “Refined petroleum products”.
* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” increased by 9.6%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Articles of apparel and clothing” (+12.9%), “Professional, scientific & controlling instruments & apparatus, n.e.s” (+11.0%) and “Articles n.e.s, of plastic” (+1.5%).
* “Food and live animals” increased by 3.8%, mainly due to higher imports of “Rice  
   (+99.6%), “Vegetables and fruits” (+24.7%) and “Fish and fish preparations” (+9.4%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Wheat” (-26.5%) and “Dairy products and bird’s eggs” (-0.4%).
* “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” increased by 1.4%, mainly due to increases in the imports of “Plastics in non-primary forms” (+23.5%) and “Plastics in primary forms” (+4.8%), partly offset by a decrease in the imports of “Medicinal & pharmaceutical products” (-2.0%).
* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” decreased by 8.3%, mainly due to decreases in the imports of “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones” (-72.4%), “Iron and Steel” (-12.1%), “Paper, paperboard & articles thereof” (-11.1%) and “Cement” (-0.2%), partly offset by increases in the imports of “Manufactures of metals, n.e.s” (+17.4%) and “Other textile fabrics” (+3.1%).
  1. **Imports by country of origin (Table 13) – 1st Quarter 2024**

During the first quarter of 2024, our imports originated from five main countries, namely: China (17.1%), India (14.7%), U.A.E. (12.4%), South Africa (8.1%) and France (5.6%). Among continents, Asia was our main supplier with a share of Rs 41,677 million, representing 59.7% of total imports followed by Europe, with a share of Rs 15,420 million, representing 22.1% of total imports and Africa, with a share of Rs 9,386 million, representing 13.4% of total imports.

Compared to the corresponding period of 2023, total imports from India, China and South Africa rose by 84.6%, 29.8% and 25.1% respectively, while imports from United Arab Emirates and France decreased by 34.4% and 9.5% respectively.



**5. Trade with Member States of Regional Organisations – 1st Quarter 2024**

For the first quarter of 2024, exports1 to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States stood at Rs 4,864 million against total imports of Rs 8,763 million. The trade deficit with ACP countries worked out to Rs 3,899 million. South Africa was the main supplier with a value of Rs 5,682 million, representing 64.8% of the total imports from ACP states and the main buyer was Madagascar with a value of Rs 2,005 million, representing 41.2% 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 2024 attained Rs 2,799 million, while total imports from these countries amounted to Rs 2,425 million, resulting in a trade deficit of Rs 374 million. Madagascar was the main buyer with a share of 71.6% followed by Kenya (16.4%). The main suppliers were Seychelles (37.9%) followed by Kenya (18.9%), Egypt (18.5%) and Madagascar (14.0%) (*Table 15*).

Trade with SADC countries showed a deficit of Rs 3,183 million, as a result of total imports of Rs 7,325 million against exports worth Rs 4,142 million. The main supplier was South Africa (77.6%) and main buyers were Madagascar (48.4%) and South Africa (43.2%)  
(*Table 16*).

**6. Trade in Freeport Zone – 1st Quarter 2024**

During the first quarter of 2024, total imports of the Freeport Zone stood at   
Rs 2,696 million, higher by 11.0% compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023   
(*Table 12*). The main items imported were “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (25.8%) and “Food and live animals” (24.0%).

Re-exports were valued at Rs 3,242 million, representing a decrease of 4.1% compared to the corresponding period of 2023 (*Table 6*). The main items re-exported were “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (33.1%) and “Food and live animals” (30.9%).

**7. Forecast 2024**

Based on trends and information from various sources, the forecast of total exports for 2024 will be around Rs 104 billion, same level as year 2023. Total imports for 2024 including one-off items such as machinery for metro terminals, will be around Rs 300 billion, 5.6% higher than the total imports of around Rs 284 billion in 2023.

The trade deficit for 2024 is forecasted at around Rs 196 billion, 8.9% higher as compared to around Rs 180 billion in 2023.

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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