**External Merchandise Trade Statistics – 1st Quarter 2021**

# **Introduction**

This issue of Economic and Social Indicators presents external merchandise trade statistics for the first quarter of 2021 and the years 2019 and 2020. 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 Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) - Customs Department.

Thus, while revised figures for 2019 are published in this indicator, those for 2020 and 2021 are still provisional and will be revised, as and when latest amendments are obtained from the Customs Department of 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 2021 was valued at Rs 61,743 million, i.e. 7.6% lower than the value of Rs 66,856 million of the previous quarter and 2.1% lower than the value of Rs 63,092 million of the corresponding quarter of 2020.

For the first quarter of 2021, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) were valued at Rs 17,353 million against total imports of Rs 44,390 million. In the previous quarter, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores and bunkers) amounted to   
Rs 19,484 million against total imports of Rs 47,372 million while for the corresponding quarter of 2020, total exports (inclusive of ship’s stores & bunkers) amounted to   
Rs 19,000 million against total imports of Rs 44,092 million. In the first quarter of 2021, total exports and total imports were lower by 10.9% and 6.3% respectively compared to the previous quarter. Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, total exports went down by 8.7% while total imports were 0.7% higher.

The resulting trade deficit for the first quarter of 2021 worked out to Rs 27,037 million, 3.1% lower than the deficit of Rs 27,888 million of the previous quarter and 7.8% higher than the deficit of Rs 25,092 million of the corresponding quarter of 2020.



1. **Exports**

**3.1 Total exports (Tables 1 & 3) – 1st Quarter 2021**

For the first quarter of 2021, total exports proceeds, including domestic exports1,re-exports2 and ship’s stores and bunkers amounted to Rs 17,353 million, showing a decrease of 10.9% compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Machinery and transport equipment” (-33.2%), “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (-29.6%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material”   
(-27.0%), “Food and live animals” (-12.2%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles”   
(-9.6%), partly offset by an increase in the exports of “Ship’s Stores and Bunkers” (+24.9%) and “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (+36.6%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, total exports for the first quarter of 2021 decreased by 8.7%. This is mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Ship’s Stores and Bunkers” (-31.0%), “Food and live animals” (-9.8%), “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (-8.6%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-7.8%), partly offset by increases in exports of “Miscellaneous manufactured goods” (+7.0%) and “Machinery and transport equipment” (+3.3%).

For the first quarter of 2021, domestic exports amounted to Rs 11,764 million, accounting for 67.8% of total exports proceeds. Compared to the previous quarter, domestic exports which amounted to Rs 14,114 million, showed a decrease of 16.7%. This is mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material”   
(-32.5%), “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (-28.6%), “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-16.7%) and “Food and live animals” (-9.3%), partly offset by an increase the exports of “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (+34.7%). Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, domestic exports were lower by 1.9%, mainly explained by decreases in exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-23.8%), “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (-9.2%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-0.6%), partly offset by increases in the exports of “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (+9.2%) and “Food and live animals” (+4.6%) *(Table 4).*

For the first quarter of 2021, re-exports stood at Rs 3,179 million, i.e. lower by 7.6% compared to the previous quarter, mainly due to decreases in re-exports of “Food and live animals” (-32.1%), “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s” (-29.7%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (-20.6%) and “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material”   
(-5.3%), partly offset by an increase in re-exports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+57.8%) and “Crude materials, inedible, except fuels” (+38.3%). Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, re-exports were lower by 9.5%, mainly due to decreases in re-exports of “Food and live animals” (-60.2%), “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s”(-8.1%) and “Machinery and transport equipment” (-0.8%), partly offset by increases in re-exports of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+129.6%) and “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+74.7%) *(Table 5).*

**3.2 Exports by SITC section (Tables 1 & 3) – 1st Quarter 2021**

Around 32.3% of total exports for the first quarter of 2021 consisted of “Food and live animals” (Rs 5,603 million), 32.2% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles”   
(Rs 5,584 million) and 11.5% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material”  
(Rs 1,995 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 2020, the main changes by section are as follows:

* “Food and live animals” decreased by 9.8%, mainly due to decreases in the exports of “Fish and fish preparations” (-19.6%) and “Cane Sugar” (-2.0%).
* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” decreased by 7.8%, mainly explained by a decrease of 47.9% in exports of “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones”, partly offset by an increase of 4.2% in exports of “Textile yarns, fabrics, made up articles”.
* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” registered an increase of 7.0%, mainly due to increases in exports of “Instruments and appliances, n.e.s for medical, surgical, dental or veterinary purposes” (+41.3%), “Jewellery, goldsmiths' & silversmiths' wares” (+13.6%) and “Articles of apparel and clothing accessories” (+1.2%).

**3.3 Exports of Export Oriented Enterprises (EOE) – 1st Quarter 2021**

For the first quarter of 2021, exports of EOE amounted to Rs 9,435 million, compared to   
Rs 9,535 million for the corresponding quarter of 2020 (*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 2021.

**3.4 Exports by country of destination (Table 7) – 1st Quarter 2021**

Analysis of exports figures by country of destination for the first quarter of 2021 showed that the European countries were our main buyers, purchasing some 46.0% of our exports excluding ship’s stores and bunkers, for a value of Rs 6,874 million. Among countries, the major destinations for our exports were South Africa (12.9%), U.K (10.7%), France (8.2%), Italy (7.4%), U.S.A (7.2%), Madagascar (7.0%), Netherlands (5.1%) and Spain (4.9%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, exports to South Africa, Italy, United Kingdom and France went up by 29.3%, 21.7%, 10.0% and 4.0% respectively. On the other hand, exports to U.S.A., Spain, Netherlands and Madagascar dropped by 31.1%, 23.9%, 21.2% and 4.8% respectively.



**4. Imports**

**4.1 Total imports (Table 10) – 1st Quarter 2021**

Total imports for the first quarter of 2021 amounted to Rs 44,390 million, showing a decrease of 6.3% compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly due to decreases in imports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (-20.3%), “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (-19.1%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (-15.1%), “Machinery and transport equipment” (-9.5%) and “Food and live animals” (-6.0%), partly offset by an increase in imports of “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (+39.0%) and “Animals & vegetable oils and fats” (+36.6%).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, total imports for the first quarter of 2021 increased by 0.7%. This is mainly due to increases in imports of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (+39.8%), “Food and live animals” (+16.4%), “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” (+12.0%), “Chemicals and related products n.e.s” (+10.3%), partly offset by decreases in imports of “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” (-26.6%) and “Machinery & transport equipment” (-7.2%).

**4.2 Imports by SITC section (Table 10) – 1st Quarter 2021**

Around 21.8% of imports in the first quarter of 2021 consisted of “Machinery and transport equipment” (Rs 9,686 million), 20.1% of “Food and live animals”  
(Rs 8,943 million), 17.6% of “Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials”  
(Rs 7,800 million), 15.5% of “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material”   
(Rs 6,899 million), 10.3% of “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (Rs 4,592 million) and 9.2% of “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” (Rs 4,062 million).

Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020, total imports increased by 0.7%. Main changes by section are as follows:

* “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” increased by 39.8%, mainly due to increases in imports of “Articles of apparel and clothing” (+82.0%), “Footwear” (+81.6%), “Articles n.e.s, of plastic” (+9.7%) and “Professional, scientific & controlling instruments & apparatus, n.e.s” (+6.5%).
* “Food and live animals” increased by 16.4%, mainly due to higher imports of “Wheat” (+158.3%) and “Fish and fish preparations” (+11.5%), partly offset by decreases in imports of “Meat and meat preparations” (-19.8%), “Dairy products and bird’s eggs” (-1.2%) and “Vegetables and fruits” (-0.7%).
* “Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material” increased by 12.0%, mainly due to increases in imports of “Textile yarn” (+82.4%), “Other textile fabrics” (+27.9%), “Paper, paperboard & articles thereof” (+26.7%), “Iron and Steel” (+8.6%) and “Manufactures of metals, n.e.s” (+7.1%), partly offset by decreases in imports “Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones” (-32.4%), “Cotton fabrics”  
  (-48.6%) and “Cement”(-2.6%).
* “Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.” increased by 10.3%, mainly due to increases in imports of “Plastics in primary forms” (+39.2%), “Plastics in non-primary forms” (29.2%) and “Dyeing & tanning materials” (20.0%), partly offset by a decrease in imports of “Medicinal & pharmaceutical products” (-14.6%).
* “Mineral fuels, lubricants & related products” decreased by 26.6%, mainly due to a fall of 33.4% in the imports of “Refined petroleum products”.
* “Machinery and transport equipment” decreased by 7.2%, mainly due to decreases in imports of “Machinery specialised for particular industries” (-30.4%), “Office machines & automatic data processing machines” (-17.6%) and “General industrial machinery & equipment, n.e.s., & machine parts, n.e.s” (-4.7%), partly offset by increases in imports of “Telecommunications & sound recording & reproducing apparatus & equipment” (+14.1%), “Electrical machinery, apparatus & appliances, n.e.s., & electrical parts of household type” (+9.5%) and “Road vehicles” (+4.7%).
  1. **Imports by country of origin (Table 13) – 1st Quarter 2021**

During the first quarter of 2021, our imports originated from five main countries, namely: China (16.8%), India (12.0%), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (11.4%), South Africa (7.7%) and France (7.7%). Among continents, Asia was our main supplier with a share of  
Rs 24,371 million, representing 54.9% of total imports followed by Europe, with a share of Rs 11,293 million, representing 25.4% of total imports and Africa, with a share of   
Rs 5,402 million, representing 12.2% of total imports.

Compared to the corresponding period of 2020, total imports from China, India, France and South Africa rose by 34.5%, 26.7%, 24.6% and 6.7% respectively, while imports from United Arab Emirates decreased by 44.4%.



**5. Trade with Member States of Regional Organisations – 1st Quarter 2021**

For the first quarter of 2021, exports1 to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States stood at Rs 4,078 million against total imports of Rs 4,954 million. The trade deficit with ACP countries worked out to Rs 876 million. South Africa was the main supplier with a value of Rs 3,431 million, representing 69.3% of the total imports from ACP states as well as the main buyer with a value of Rs 1,933 million, representing 47.4% of the exports1 to ACP states (*Table 14*).

1 Excluding ship’s stores and bunkers

Exports to COMESA member states attained Rs 1,916 million, while total imports from these countries amounted to Rs 1,623 million, resulting in a trade surplus of Rs 293 million. Madagascar was the main buyer with a share of 54.5% followed by Kenya (25.3%). The main suppliers were Seychelles (50.3%), Kenya (18.5%) and Egypt (16.9%) (*Table 15*).

Trade with SADC countries showed a deficit of Rs 1,112 million, as a result of total imports of Rs 4,547 million against exports worth Rs 3,435 million. The main supplier was South Africa (75.4%) and main buyers were South Africa (56.3%) and Madagascar (30.4%) (*Table 16*).

**6. Trade in Freeport Zone – 1st Quarter 2021**

During the first quarter of 2021, total imports of the Freeport Zone stood at   
Rs 2,465 million, higher by 43.7% compared to the corresponding quarter of 2020   
(*Table 12*). The main items imported were “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (43.0%) and “Chemicals & related products, n.e.s.” (15.9%).

Re-exports were valued at Rs 2,065 million, representing a decrease of 22.5% compared to the corresponding period of 2020 (*Table 6*). The main items re-exported were “Miscellaneous manufactured articles” (37.8%) and “Food and live animals” (21.7%).

**7. Forecast 2021**

Based on past trends, available trade data for the first three months and information from various sources, total exports for year 2021 will be around Rs 75,000 million and total imports (including one off items such as marine vessels, machinery for metro terminals, cranes and tugs) will be around Rs 180,000 million, same as forecasted in February 2021.

The trade deficit for 2021 is forecasted to be around Rs 105,000 million compared to   
Rs 95,944 million in 2020.

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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