

Thai International Trade – January 2021

In January 2021, Thai exports continued to expand for second consecutive month amid the new wave of COVID-19 outbreak. A global economic recovery, massive monetary and fiscal stimulus measures as well as effective COVID-19 vaccines coupled with extensive vaccination supported Thai export growth.

Thai exports in January 2021 reached 19.71 billion USD, representing an increase of 0.35% (year-on-year). Furthermore, the January 2021 export value was higher than the 5-year average (18.32 billion USD). Thai imports declined by 5.24% (year-on-year) to 19.91 billion USD, resulting in trade deficit of 202.39 million USD. The export growth in this month resulted from the robust recovery of real sector, reflected by the 7.57% expansion of export value excluding gold, oil, and weaponry. Food, Work-from-home products and home appliances, as well as Covid-19 protection products exports continued to soar. Moreover, major industrial products, such as automobile and parts, electronic integrated circuits, and computers and parts showed signs of recovery – providing positive momentum for Thai exports in the future.

Export Products

Agricultural and agro-industrial products exports rose 3.7% (YoY). Products that still expanded favourably include palm oil (+345.1%), cassava products (+50.5%), fresh, frozen, canned, and processed fruits and vegetables (+31.7%), fresh and frozen pork (+38.5%), pet food (+19.3%), rubber (+1.5%). On the contrary, exports of some products decreased, namely, sugar (-48.1%), rice (-15.9%), fresh, frozen, and processed chicken (-7.9%), frozen, canned, and processed seafood (-0.8%).

Industrial product exports increased 0.9% (YoY). Products that expanded favorably include rubber gloves (+200.5%), automobile, equipment, and parts (+25.7%), fax, cell phone and parts (+17.4%), electronic integrated circuits (+12.6%), furniture and parts (+12.4%), computers, equipment, and parts (+9.2%), rubber tires (+4.2%). Meanwhile, exports of some products declined such as gold (-90.3%), radio and television receivers and parts (-8.2%), machinery and parts (-5.2%), cosmetics, soaps, and skincare products (-5.0%), oil-related products (-4.5%).

Export Markets

Exports continued to recover in many markets in line with economic recovery of major trading partners.

- Exports to main markets expanded by 5.7%. Exports to US and Japan rose by 12.4% and 7.4% respectively, while exports to EU market contracted 5.4%.



- Exports to high potential markets expanded by 1.4%. Exports to China, and CLMV grew 9.9% and 3.8% respectively, while exports to ASEAN (5) and South Asia declined 11.0% and 8.3% respectively.
- Exports to emerging markets expanded by 10.3%. Exports to Australia, Middle East, and Africa increased by 30.3%, 13.1%, and 6.3% respectively, while exports to Latin America, and Russia and CIS contracted by 2.9% and 2.1% respectively.

Export Prospects and Promotion Strategies in 2021

Thai export in 2021 should move in a favorable direction, corresponding to the vivid signs of global economic recovery which include (1) the demands of industrial products were unceasingly higher in the last 3 months; (2) the global oil demand is rising, reflected by average oil prices which are higher relative to the end of last year and near their pre-pandemic levels; and (3) the COVID-19 vaccines are distributed effectively in several regions which help boost trading partner economies and increase consumer confidence.

For export promotion plans in 2021, the Ministry of Commerce has set out key policies to encourage Thai economy and trade, for example, Thailand's Rice Strategic Plan which supports Thailand to be the leader of high-quality rice producers in world market, and Thai Halal product export promotion to increase Muslim-food market penetration. Simultaneously, the Ministry gives great importance on a speedy resolution to trading problems and challenges such as shortage of shipping containers.

Trade Policy and Strategy Office

Ministry of Commerce

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