

## Thailand International Trade – March 2020 and the first quarter of 2020

Thai exports in March 2020 expanded 4.17 percent with the value of 22.4 billion USD, biggest expansion in eight months. Excluding golds, oil, and weaponry, Thai exports in March 2020 expanded 2.12 percent. Electronic products such as computer and parts dominated export rebound from real sector and registered positive growth for a fourth consecutive month. Recovery sign of electronic products reflected across major markets such as US, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. Moreover, exports of agro-industrial products such as fruits and vegetables, frozen and processed chicken, sugar, and pet food have continuously expanded, in response to rising demands in foods and other essential products. However, global oil prices have suppressed exports of oil-related products, which accounted for 8.2 percent of this month's total exports. **For the first quarter of 2020**, Thai exports expanded 0.91 percent. Excluding golds, oil, and weaponry, Thai exports still grew at 1.06 percent.

### Export Products

In March 2020, agricultural and agro-industrial products decreased 1.1%. Some products still expanded favorably, for example, sugar (+17.5%), fresh, frozen, and processed fruits and vegetables (+15.8%), fresh, frozen, and processed chicken (+7.5%) and pet food (+11.5%). On the contrary, exports of some products decreased, namely, rubber (-24.7%), rice (-13.2%), cassava products (-13.1%) and canned and processed seafood products (-6.0%). For the first quarter of 2020, exports of agricultural and agro-industrial products dropped 3.4 percent.

Industrial products expanded 6.4% in March 2020. Some products expanded favorably, for example, golds (+215.2%), Parts of aircraft and accessories (+1,129.3%), computer and parts (+17.6%) steel and steel products (+29.5%) air-conditioners (+8.1%) and other vehicles and parts (+1,263.2%). Meanwhile, exports of some products declined, namely, automobiles and parts (-28.7%), oil-related products (-17.4%), Precious stones and jewelry (excluding gold) (-25.3%) and electric circuits (-4.3%). For the first quarter of 2020, exports of industrial products rose 1.9 percent.

### Export Markets

Overall, exports declined in most markets. This was partly because the spread of the coronavirus has disrupted trade logistics. However, some markets are expanding, such as the US (15) (+42.9%), ASEAN (5) (+6.8%), CLMV (+2.9%) and Australia (5.7%).

- Exports to the main markets expanded by 10.1%. Exports to US expanded by 42.9%. On the contrary, exports to the EU (15) and Japan contracted by 14.8% and 2.8%.
- Exports to high potential markets expanded by 3.6%. Exports to the ASEAN(5) and CLMV markets expanded by 6.8% and 2.9% respectively, while exports to the Chinese and South Asian markets contracted by 4.8% and 24.4% respectively.
- Exports to other markets dropped by 6.2%, namely, Middle East (9.7%), Africa (18.4%), Latin America (7.9%), Russia and CIS (12.1%), while exports to Australia rebounded to 5.7%.



## 2020 Export Prospects and Promotion Strategies

The spread of the Coronavirus has highlighted the growing demand for agricultural products and processed foods. Thailand, as one of major food producers in the world, can capitalize this opportunity and increase consumer recognition and confidence in the products from Thailand.

Despite global challenging factors, there are supporting factors for Thai exports for the rest of 2020 including 1) Thailand’s strength and competency in food and agricultural industry and essential goods to fulfill increasing demand 2) China’s recovery from the outbreak and its production is expected to reach full capacity by the end of April which would benefit Thai exports in related supply chain 3) The Thai Baht depreciation will support the export of products with high price sensitivity.

For the export promotion in 2020, the Ministry of Commerce has swiftly adjusted export promotion to online-based activities by organizing the online exhibition and online business matching, starting from May – August 2020.

### Export Value and Growth

Unit: Million USD	Mar 2020	Jan-Mar 2020
Export value	22,404.6 4.17 %	62,672.1 0.91 %
Import value	20,812.5 7.25 %	58,738.4 -1.92 %
Trade Balance	+1,592.1	+3,933.7



Trade Policy and Strategy Office

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