

Exports and Imports

The Thai exports in March 2019 dropped 4.9 percent with the value of 21.4 billion USD. A contraction is largely influenced by recent global trade and economic slowdown. Impacts from trade disputes between US and China remain to some extent; however, substantial progress of trade talks between the two superpowers send a positive signal to the market and improves global trade sentiment.

Looking at the actual value of Thai exports, it is slightly increasing from January and seems stabilized. It is expected that overall global outlook as well as Thailand's trade performance will pick up in the second half of the year.

On import side, its value in March 2019 decreased 7.6 percent to 19.4 billion USD, resulting in a trade surplus of 2,005 million USD. For the first quarter of 2019, Thailand exports registered -1.64 percent growth rate.

Supporting Factors for Thailand exports in March 2019 are positive sign on US-China trade negotiations, upward trend of global oil prices, Baht depreciation in recent weeks, good image and strong consumer confidence to Thai's products as well as proactive export promotion schemes in specific provinces/states in China and India.

Challenging Factors for Thailand exports in 2019 are exchange rate volatility, trade policy uncertainty and new FTAs which will enter into force this year. These might affect Thailand's trade competitiveness.

Export Markets

Thailand exports are influenced by global trade momentum. Ongoing trade disputes between US and China have posed direct and indirect impacts undermining trading partners' economies especially those highly related to Chinese supply chain such as Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Nonetheless, Thailand exports to some markets remain positive such as Japan, Vietnam, India, and United Kingdom. These are attributed by sector specific factors. Moreover, growing exports to Japan is supported by frontloading of consumer spending before tax hike later this year.

Export Products

Industrial products contracted 6.0 percent compared to the same period last year, led by computer and parts (-20.0%), oil-related products (-11.3%), electronic circuits (-21.7%), machinery and parts (-19.5%). However, exports of some products increased favorably, for example, automobiles and parts (+5.6%), Motorcycle and parts (+20.7%), rubber products (+14.8%), radio, television, and parts (+20.6%).

Agricultural and Agro-industrial products rebound from last month's contraction and registered growth of 3.2 percent compared to the same period last

year, led by fresh, frozen and processed fruits and vegetables (+30.0%), fresh, frozen and processed chicken (+14.2%), rubber (+6.5%), canned tuna (+6.4%). However, some products declined such as sugar (-23.0%), rice (-7.7%), cassava products (-9.4%).

Export Prospects

It is worth emphasizing that Thai exports showed resilience to external factors and performed relatively better than Asian countries. The recent trend of Thailand exports coincides with global outlook, which is still facing downside risks including recent global trade slowdown, ongoing trade disputes, and downward trend of commodity prices. On the bright side, major economies have implemented significant policy accommodation, which would hopefully support a pick up later this year, such as stabilized policy rate in US, more accommodative monetary policy in EU, Japan, and UK, and monetary and fiscal stimulus in China.

The Ministry of Commerce strongly believes that active trade promotion schemes would boost export value in the rest of 2019. The ministry has prepared several trade promotion missions in China and India as well as in prospective markets such as Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe throughout the year. Also, online trade is strongly encouraged through digital trade platform such as Thaitrade.com and other potential e-Marketplace - connecting offline to online trade as well as bridging local economy to global arena. Lastly, the Ministry of Commerce has placed its priority on strategic partnership and international business network to capitalize and diversify Thailand's export opportunities for the long-run sustainable growth.

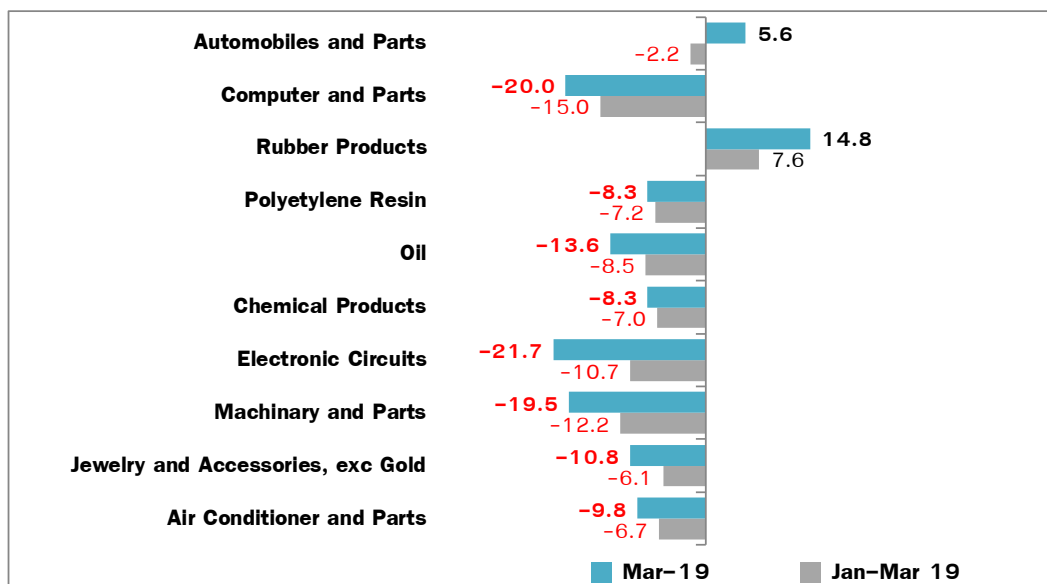
Trade Policy and Strategy Office

April 2019

Export Value and Growth

Unit: Million USD	Mar 2019	Jan-Mar 2019
Export value	21,440.2 -4.88%	61,987.8 -1.64%
Import value	19,435.5 -7.63%	59,981.1 -1.20%
Trade Balance	+2,004.7	+2,006.7

Export by Products



Export by country/region

