

From Durians to Delays: Vietnam's Trade Momentum Tested

EBC Financial Group examines Vietnam's USD3.8B fruit and vegetable exports rebound and the potential impact of certification delays and red tape.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Vietnam's export sector is seeing a sharp upswing in 2025 — with bananas, seafood, durians, and wood products gaining traction in international markets — yet cracks in the foundation are forming. While global demand is heating up, traders and policymakers face growing pressure to streamline bottlenecks in regulatory processes and certification timelines, especially for agricultural goods.



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EBC Financial Group highlights Vietnam's export paradox — while demand for durians, dragon fruit, and other agricultural products is rising, regulatory and logistical hurdles continue to challenge the nation's trade momentum.

"Vietnam is clearly winning in terms of trade visibility and sectoral growth," said David Barrett, CEO of EBC Financial Group (UK) Ltd. "But traders must watch both the growth story and the friction points. The country's booming exports are becoming increasingly segmented — what's thriving abroad may still stumble at the border."

Agricultural Winners: Fruit, Seafood, and Wood Shine

Vietnam's fruit and vegetable exports reached over USD3.8 billion in the first seven months of 2025, with durian, coconut, dragon fruit, and lychees leading the surge. Durian exports alone accounted for USD3.3 billion in 2024, and more than USD360 million in June this year, with EBC analysts noting that improved cross-border quality assurance and direct rail routes to China having helped cement Vietnam's position as a top-tier supplier. Viet coconuts also gained traction - once overshadowed by Thai and Philippine exports, Vietnamese coconuts are now priced at USD7.26 per kilogramme this year, up from USD1.21 in 2022 due to rising global demand, bolstered by demand in Korea and the Middle East for natural and plant-based drinks.

Seafood exports, particularly shrimp have rebounded sharply. Between January and June 2025, Vietnam's shrimp exports to China (including Hong Kong) reached nearly USD595 million, up more than 80% year-on-year. This marks the first time China has overtaken the U.S. as Vietnam's largest shrimp buyer. EBC analysts note that shipments to China are accelerating, with prices stabilising due to reopening momentum and the easing of non-tariff barriers.

Vietnam's wood sector continues to be a quiet powerhouse. EBC analysts highlight that while the sector doesn't often make headlines, it plays a key role in Vietnam's industrial trade mix. In the first half of 2025, wood exports reached USD8.21 billion — an 8.9% year-on-year increase — with the U.S. accounting for 55.6% of shipments, followed by Japan and China. Sustainability is now a key selling point: many Vietnamese exporters are adopting FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification to access ESG-sensitive markets. Strong demand from these key markets is fuelling export growth across furniture, MDF boards, and other value-added goods.

The Red Tape Problem: Delays, Dumping, and Missed Opportunities

Despite Vietnam's strong export momentum, traders should be watching for hidden chokepoints especially in time-sensitive exports like perishable fruits. Dragon fruit exporters, for instance, are facing costly certification delays that turn market opportunity into sunk costs. According to VietnamNet Global, more than 100 tonnes of GlobalGAP-certified dragon fruit spoiled after 20 days in storage, while another 50–70 tonnes remain in cold warehouses with no export green light.

One major exporter, Son Tra Co. in Lam Đồng, had to dump 40 tonnes entirely, and slash prices on another 50 tonnes to just VND¥1,000–2,000/kg — an approximately ten-fold collapse from the usual VND¥20,000/kg EU-bound rate.

EBC Financial Group analysts warn that this “last-mile bottleneck” reflects a growing mismatch between Vietnam's production readiness and its regulatory processing capacity, a gap that traders should account for when pricing risks.

The EU, in particular, is tightening origin tracing, pesticide limits, and cold-chain documentation, prompting Vietnamese regulators to issue new directives to avoid trans-shipment violations. For traders, this could mean longer lead times, inconsistent customs clearance, and potential price spikes; all reasons why EBC recommends closely tracking export certification trends and regional compliance shifts as part of any Southeast Asia-focused trading strategy.

Implications for Global Traders

Vietnam's export data paints a tale of two markets. On one hand, booming demand for shrimp, durians, coconuts, and FSC-certified wood products positions Vietnam as a key supplier in Asia's

commodity value chain; on the other, mounting red tape and shifting regulations, like those affecting dragon fruit and pepper exports, introduce real operational risk.

EBC Financial Group analysts advise traders to go beyond headline trade numbers. Monitor customs clearance timelines, local certificate issuance backlogs, and transport lead times, particularly for perishable or seasonal goods. In fast-moving agri-markets, even a week's delay can reverse a profitable trade.

For those trading soft commodities or agriculture futures, Vietnam offers both upside and complexity. Spotting where demand strength is undercut by structural bottlenecks or where ESG compliance opens access to premium markets can offer a tactical edge. In Southeast Asia's evolving trade landscape, agility matters as much as insight.

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