



Energising Zimbabwe's Export Growth



ZIMBABWE - EUROPEAN TRADE BRIEF UNION



EUROPEAN UNION TRADE BRIEF

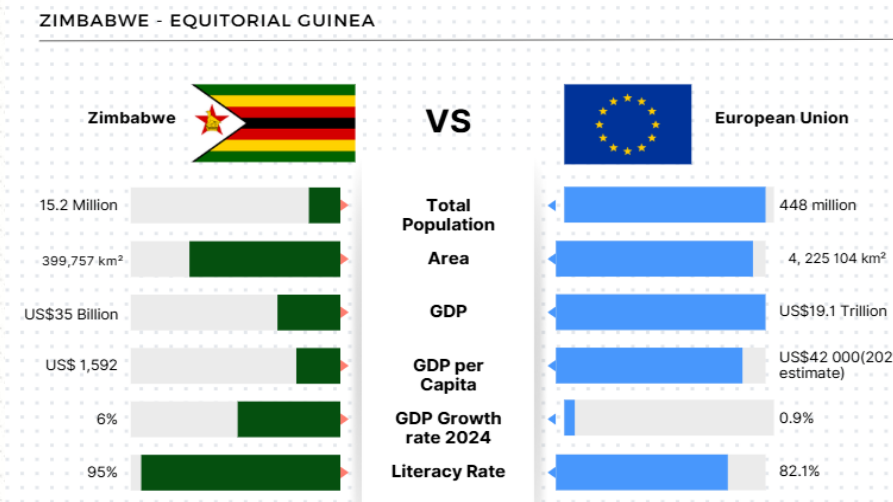
1. The European Union (EU) Overview

The **European Union (EU)**, a political and economic union of **27 member states**, is one of the world's largest and most influential economic blocs. Located primarily in **Europe**, the EU is a global leader in **trade, innovation, and sustainable development**, with a highly integrated single market facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.

The EU's economy grew by **0.5% in 2023**, reflecting resilience despite global challenges such as inflation and energy market fluctuations. The bloc remains a dominant force in **automotive manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, aerospace, renewable energy, and high-tech industries**, making it a crucial trading partner for nations worldwide, including **Zimbabwe**.

Key Economic Indicators (2023)

- **GDP: \$18.4 trillion** (nominal)
- **GDP per capita: \$41,000**
- **Population: 448 million**
- **Major Industries:** Automotive, Machinery, Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture, Renewable Energy, Information Technology
- **Top Trade Partners:** United States, China, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Russia, Japan



2. Zimbabwe – EU Trade

Trade between Zimbabwe and the European Union has significantly expanded in the past four years. Total exports from Zimbabwe to the EU increased, from US\$78 million in 2020 to US\$372.8 million in 2023. This growth has been driven by demand for tobacco, minerals, and semi-precious stones.

Zimbabwe's Exports to the EU

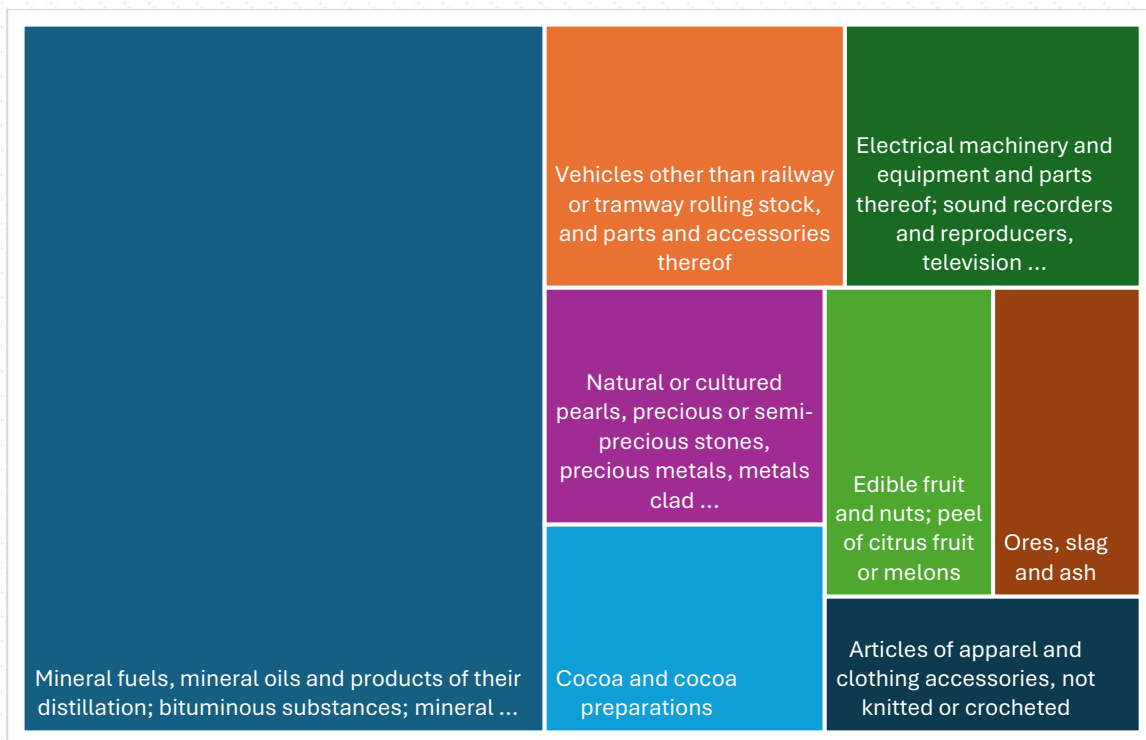
	Value in 2020	Value in 2021	Value in 2022	Value in 2023
	US\$000			
All products	78008	170209	397159	372788
Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; products, whether or not containing nicotine, ...	86	98710	195545	176226
Iron and steel	0	0	98412	97530
Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad ...	72791	63685	78589	70408
Salt; sulphur; earths and stone; plastering materials, lime and cement	2	0	11794	17087
Live trees and other plants; bulbs, roots and the like; cut flowers and ornamental foliage	2440	2873	2934	2857
Raw hides and skins (other than furskins) and leather	1670	1198	2891	2840
Articles of stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica or similar materials	0	0	1684	2504
Works of art, collectors' pieces and antiques	225	625	733	1077
Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, not knitted or crocheted	27	1941	1290	474
Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	252	51	127	419
Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical ...	17	9	50	388
Other made-up textile articles; sets; worn clothing and worn textile articles; rags	0	0	0	251
Ores, slag and ash	279	160	2860	195

Zimbabwe' Imports from the EU

Product	Value in 2020	Value in 2021	Value in 2022	Value in 2023
	US\$000			
All products	200734	261388	264531	282438
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	36340	63817	75586	78853
Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television ...	15069	15452	14208	26238
Miscellaneous chemical products	17042	24513	21078	24155
Pharmaceutical products	28726	30129	25998	22748
Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical ...	7688	11068	12525	22128
Cereals	40992	19302	25341	20386
Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof	6235	13653	10442	18936
Printed books, newspapers, pictures and other products of the printing industry; manuscripts, ...	154	109	10409	13155
Essential oils and resinoids; perfumery, cosmetic or toilet preparations	5156	10421	8759	10620
Dairy produce; birds' eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin, not elsewhere ...	4361	19187	8717	6585
Live trees and other plants; bulbs, roots and the like; cut flowers and ornamental foliage	2866	1783	1554	4182
Plastics and articles thereof	3308	6039	3875	3497
Live animals	498	1200	1417	3140
Animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils and their cleavage products; prepared edible fats; ...	412	147	841	3038
Articles of iron or steel	2975	2202	2270	1936
Fertilisers	3188	5918	50	1924
Inorganic chemicals; organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals, of rare-earth metals, ...	2085	2167	1889	1907
Tools, implements, cutlery, spoons and forks, of base metal; parts thereof of base metal	1375	1951	1601	1707

4. The EU's Imports from Africa

The imports from Africa totalled US\$210 billion in 2024 up from US\$120 billion in 2019 translating to a 76% increase. Major imports from Africa included mineral fuels (US\$39 billion), vehicles and parts (US\$8.3 billion), mineral fuels, precious stones and metals (US\$7 billion), and electrical machinery (US\$1.1 billion). (*Refer to Annex 1*)



5. Zimbabwe products with potential in the E.U

a. Horticulture

- Trend: The EU's demand for fresh produce is growing annually.
- Opportunity: Zimbabwe's rising production of blueberries, citrus, avocados, and nuts positions it to supply niche, off-season EU markets.

b. Granite and Minerals

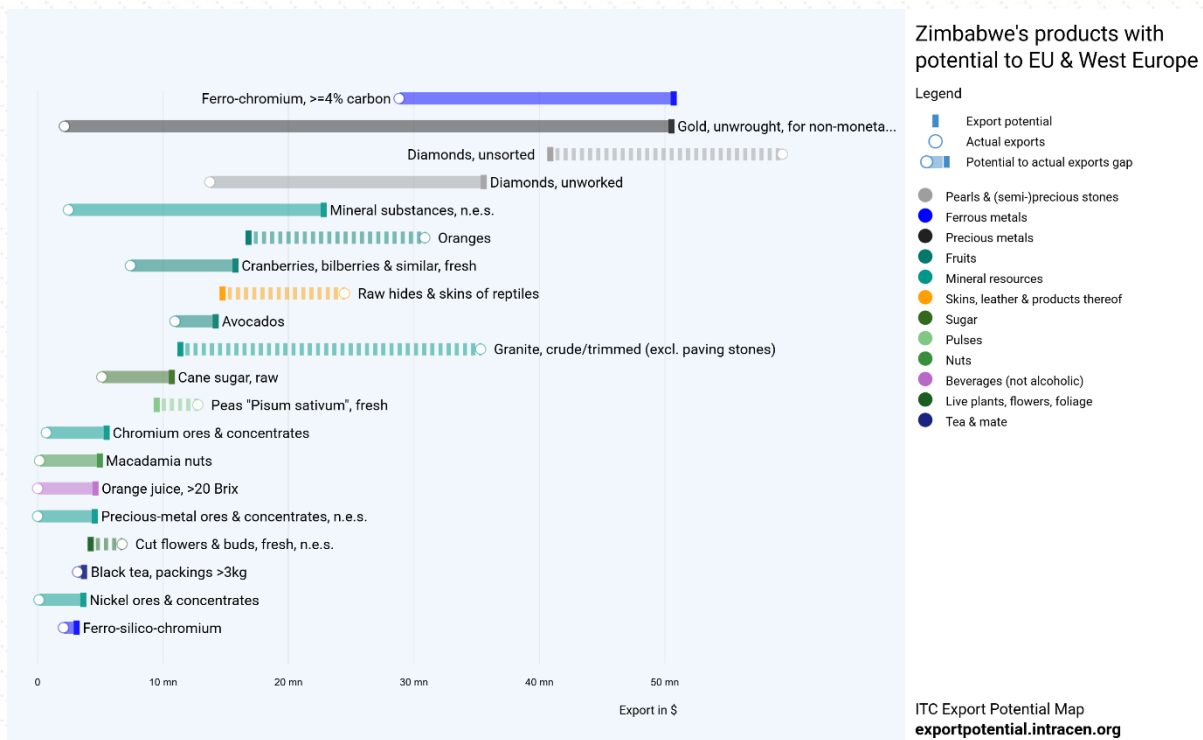
- Trend: The EU imports vast quantities of industrial minerals to support green technologies and infrastructure.
- Opportunity: Zimbabwe's granite, lithium, and chrome reserves can be linked with EU industrial needs, especially if beneficiation and technology transfer are pursued.

c. Processed Foods

- Trend: EU demand for specialty and organic foods continues to rise.
- Opportunity: Zimbabwean products such as dried fruit, teas, and herbs can be exported into this growing niche, especially under certifications like Fairtrade and Organic EU

d. Tobacco

- Trend: The EU remains one of the world's largest importers of raw tobacco, with demand driven by the processing industry for cigarettes and other tobacco products.
- Opportunity: Zimbabwe's flue-cured tobacco is globally recognized for its quality and aroma. There is strong potential to process tobacco products, especially by ensuring compliance with EU traceability and sustainability requirements under frameworks like Global GAP.



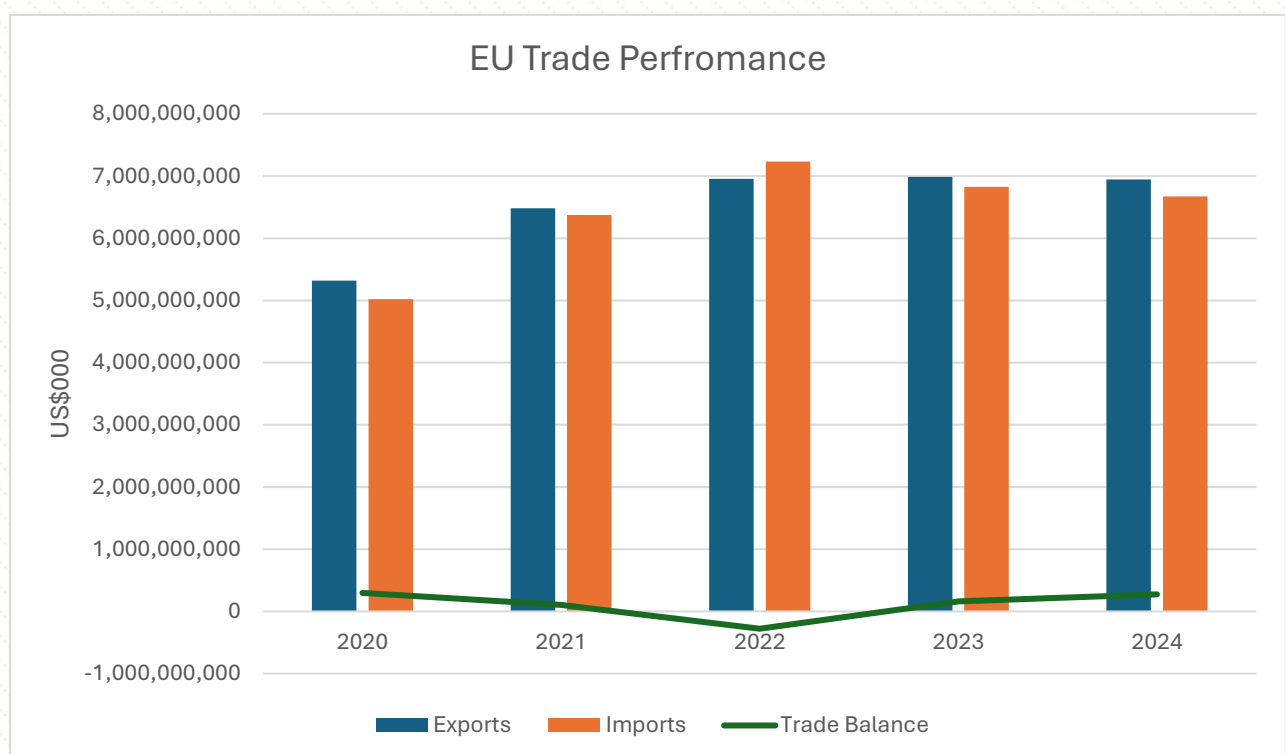
Using the ITC export potential map, the products with the greatest export potential from Zimbabwe to the EU are ferro chrome, gold unwrought, for non-monetary purposes,. Gold, unwrought, for non-monetary purposes shows the largest absolute difference between potential and actual exports in value terms, leaving room to realize additional exports worth US\$50 million.

6. The EU's Trade Performance

The EU exported goods worth US\$6,9 trillion in 2024 a decline from US\$7 trillion in 2023, with industrial products being the leading exported products. Key export products include:

- **Nuclear Reactors:** US\$5,3 trillion
- **Vehicles:** US\$726 billion
- **Electrical machinery:** US\$604 billion

The EU had a trade surplus of over US\$272 billion at the end of 2024 as it recorded US\$6.6 trillion imports in 2023.



7. The EU Imports of horticulture

The country imports horticultural produce of over US\$51.1 billion from countries such as Spain (US\$7 billion), Netherlands (US\$6 billion), Brazil, (5 billion) and Germany (3 million).

The EU's horticultural imports focus on:

- **Fresh Produce:** Coffee, berries, citrus and nuts.

Zimbabwe's horticulture sector, with its growing export capabilities is well-positioned to meet Itay's demand for high-quality horticultural products.

8. Issues to Consider

Logistics and Connectivity:

The EU has advanced logistics infrastructure. For Zimbabwe, however, challenges remain in the form of high freight costs, border delays, and refrigeration requirements for horticulture. Establishing partnerships with EU-based logistics networks is essential for reliability and freshness.

Competitors

- Horticulture: Zimbabwe faces competition from Spain, Netherlands, Kenya, and Peru.
- Minerals: Strong competition from DRC, South Africa, and Australia in lithium, platinum, and chrome.

Regulatory Barriers:

- The EU has strict import rules to protect consumers and the environment. These include standards for plant and animal health (phytosanitary), sustainability practices, and clear product labelling and traceability. For Zimbabwean exporters, meeting these requirements is essential. Certifications like GLOBALG.A.P., HACCP, and EU Organic help demonstrate compliance and build buyer confidence—opening the door to long-term success in the EU market.

9. Conclusion

Zimbabwe and the EU have strong potential to grow their trade relationship, especially in horticulture, minerals, and processed foods. To seize these opportunities, Zimbabwe must prioritize export certifications, improve trade logistics and cold chain infrastructure, and pursue strategic trade agreements. With a focus on quality, compliance, and sustainability, Zimbabwean exporters can gain lasting access to the EU's high-value markets.

10. Annexes

Annex 1: Africa's Exports to the EU

Product label	European Union (EU 27)'s imports from Africa				
	Value in 2020	Value in 2021	Value in 2022	Value in 2023	Value in 2024
All products	120102308	175972858	246385185	218571995	210591470
Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral ...	39101269	72684048	134431451	108300546	91237798
Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof	8352994	9969764	11139729	14777303	15552183
Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof, sound recorders and reproducers, television ...	8238123	9468755	10526147	12454972	12862412
Cocoa and cocoa preparations	6143283	6438884	5741119	6891950	12634139
Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad ...	7017390	9824417	10045274	7242994	7259742
Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons	5512521	5801548	5763851	6749892	7102846
Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, not knitted or crocheted	4533093	5425627	5946443	5998256	6182747
Ores, slag and ash	4825951	7474427	6656230	4930286	4638491
Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	2206009	2495223	2661136	3374191	3662361
Copper and articles thereof	2169417	2956620	3479524	2810529	3389827

Source Trademap

Annex 2: EU suppliers from Africa

Exporters	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023	Exported value in 2024
	US\$000				
Algeria	13,068,392	23,184,294	44,284,967	38,143,132	32,459,777
Morocco	17,660,405	21,766,292	24,088,474	26,974,914	30,864,212
Libya, State of	4,491,843	21,309,006	26,629,917	24,862,697	22,465,922
Nigeria	11,654,675	17,248,780	25,055,129	24,280,529	21,241,683
South Africa	16,631,463	24,042,657	26,888,092	21,105,467	19,210,784
Tunisia	10,011,651	11,554,335	12,540,400	14,102,862	15,710,411
Egypt	7,047,751	13,382,682	17,275,187	11,852,441	14,188,050
Côte d'Ivoire	4,064,891	4,658,922	4,464,608	5,285,802	6,928,229
Angola	1,844,913	2,460,787	12,611,410	9,142,640	6,343,598

Cameroon	1,111,925	1,469,043	4,514,040	3,620,486	3,437,033
Ghana	2,171,738	2,134,454	2,510,762	2,459,686	3,171,160
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	178,897	141,785	157,628	138,529	2,230,741

Source: Trade Map

Annex 3: The EU's Exports by product

Product label	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023	Exported value in 2024
	US\$000				
All products	5,319,897,901	6,480,756,092	6,954,595,078	6,986,081,001	6,946,158,176
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	726,214,093	840,681,994	831,883,176	904,105,321	898,453,047
Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof	604,411,935	690,489,870	711,724,754	837,695,036	799,278,501
Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television . . .	526,448,995	618,185,286	638,331,265	676,263,181	661,757,093
Pharmaceutical products	424,226,421	498,761,701	537,192,062	525,092,587	573,526,885
Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous	184,948,778	332,367,726	590,339,695	437,949,702	376,349,949

substances; mineral . . .					
Plastics and articles thereof	221,223,916	293,678,132	297,239,862	265,154,651	266,350,229
Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical . . .	204,655,590	237,987,905	235,865,438	255,089,899	262,792,961
Organic chemicals	142,924,672	165,286,584	185,583,890	175,260,001	166,737,620
Iron and steel	112,201,137	180,786,714	193,954,563	162,313,914	148,719,609
Articles of iron or steel	111,202,869	138,804,765	146,583,367	148,865,860	143,021,685
Miscellaneous chemical products	96,554,083	123,282,274	135,596,248	125,251,114	119,451,889
Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	80,027,530	82,750,197	86,274,277	104,446,158	107,658,142
Furniture; bedding, mattresses, mattress supports, cushions and similar stuffed furnishings; . . .	87,630,146	106,001,031	103,966,360	103,314,931	101,362,009
Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad . . .	77,447,294	95,953,732	94,027,512	89,058,770	99,842,030
Essential oils and resinoids; perfumery, cosmetic or toilet preparations	66,420,808	78,334,902	81,362,402	91,560,037	99,483,949

Paper and paperboard; articles of paper pulp, of paper or of paperboard	79,574,527	94,997,844	106,409,833	92,346,897	93,143,850
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Source: Trade Map

Annex 4: The EU's Exports by country

Exporters	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023	Exported value in 2024
	US\$000				
World	17,507,541,851	22,166,126,034	24,722,312,663	23,669,609,969	23,879,911,094
European Union (EU 27) Aggregation	5,319,897,901	6,480,756,092	6,954,595,078	6,986,081,001	6,946,158,176
Germany	1,379,900,278	1,631,098,969	1,645,377,162	1,681,974,764	1,684,013,664
Netherlands	551,352,792	696,873,257	768,259,270	741,804,035	725,520,286
The EU	498,803,832	615,910,260	659,387,209	677,095,229	674,873,608
France	478,282,779	573,227,524	608,745,460	637,660,373	626,820,762
Belgium	419,478,288	549,499,377	636,424,483	568,505,277	549,570,742
Spain	312,080,513	391,558,519	424,286,055	420,169,591	403,702,939
Poland	254,169,032	317,832,125	365,750,694	381,932,840	380,333,187
Czech Republic	192,307,380	227,168,411	241,689,131	253,327,521	259,292,432
Ireland	185,185,365	195,997,876	219,836,715	212,869,514	242,218,972
Austria	169,238,399	203,023,624	212,249,157	224,181,574	213,878,140
Sweden	154,935,587	189,635,063	197,527,811	197,533,884	195,761,855

Source: Trade Map

Annex 5: Indicative Growing window periods - Zimbabwe

Product	Window Period
Blueberries	May – Oct
Citrus (Lemons, oranges)	Mar – Aug
Avocadoes	Nov – Jun
Macadamia nuts	Oct – May
Cucumbers, bananas	Sep – May
Mange tout, mushrooms	May – Oct
Peas, sugar snaps,	Jun – Sep
Onions	May – Jul; Oct – Dec
Pineapples	Nov – Feb, Jun - Jul
Butternuts	May - Sep
Garlic & ginger	Jun - Sep

Zimbabwe has been developing its horticulture sector with a target of US\$1 billion exports by 2030. This ambitious target requires concerted efforts to open new markets and linkages.

Annex 6: Current horticulture production capacity in Zimbabwe

Below is the information received from the Horticultural Development Council pertaining to production capacities for the export of various products.

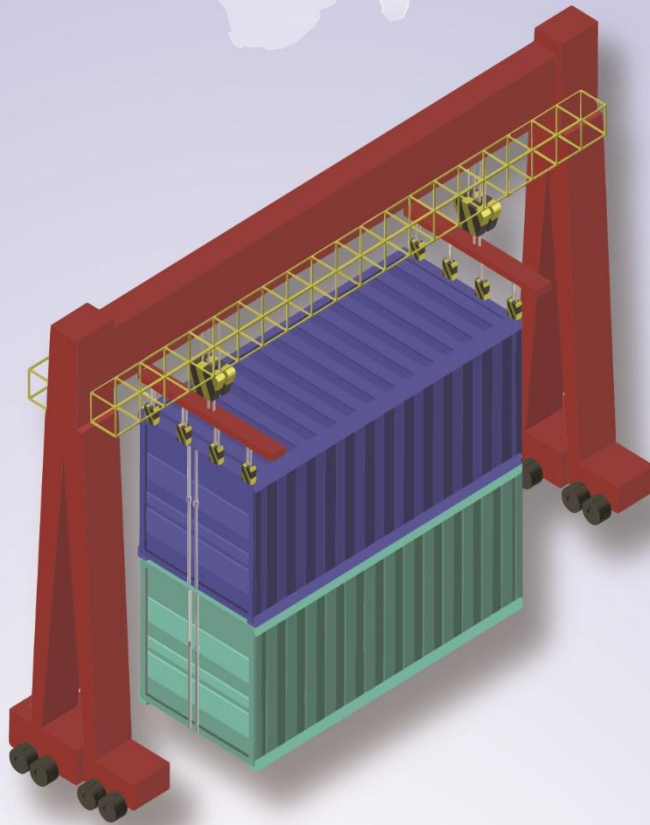
Crop	2023 (Tonnes)	Volume2024 (Tonnes)	VolumeSeasonality
Citrus	69,552	64,949	May – September
Tea	12,633	10,856	All year

Avocados	7,723	5,108	November – June
Macadamia nuts	7,495	5,213	March – June
Berries	4,582	5,172	April – September
Produce	7,482	5,110	May – September
Seed & Beans	1,220	2,483	April – September
Flowers	2,033	1,324	May – September
Spices	702	604	All year
Flower Cuttings	319	261	May – September
Essential Oils	203	203	All year
Coffee	119	203	All year
Deciduous Fruits	149	55	April – September
Jams	297	0	All year
Potatoes	15	23	April – September



Notes

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