A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW OF THE IMPORT AND EXPORT ENVIRONMENT IN JORDAN

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ABSTRACT

While thinking about Jordan what would be the first picture coming to your mind if ever you know where Jordan is: desert, sand, Bedouins, camels, perhaps a picture of Petra? Who would imagine that Jordan is one of the four world producers of potash and phosphate, the main and capital components of fertilizer and manure? Who would think that Jordan does not only export physical goods, Jordan "exports brains", knowledge through the whole of the Middle East? What everybody knows is that Arabs for centuries are traders, from the time of caravan bringing spices from India and China to Europe to the oil exportation since the 20th century. Jordanians do not fail to the rule and love of trading.

Keywords: Import and export operations, private sector, public institutions

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we shall present a global overview of Jordan's Import and Export operations through history, review examples and figures from the private sector as public institutions, and future perspectives for the kingdom.

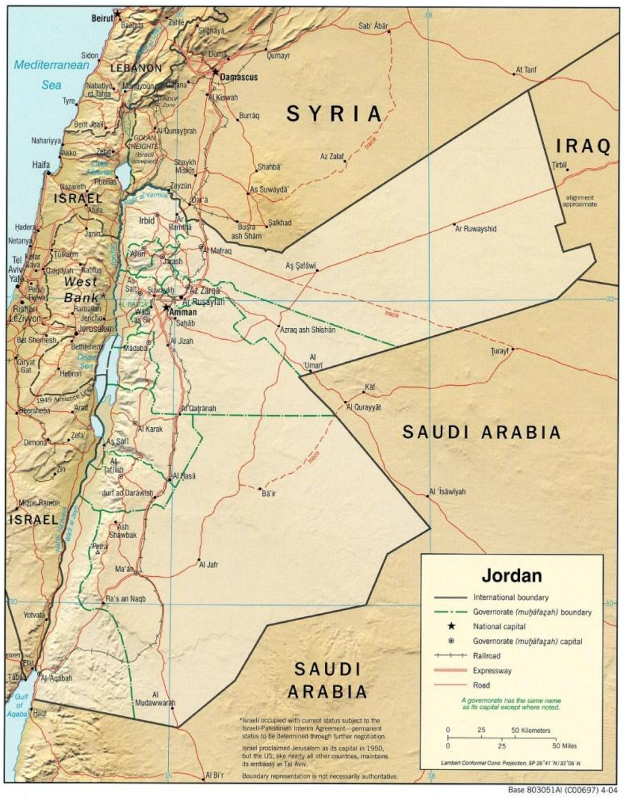

Figure 1: Global Overview of Jordan

Jordan's trade sector is growing fast, benefiting from the old adage: "One man's meat is another man poison". The recent troubles in Syria, Libya, and Egypt as the long running conflicts in Palestine/Israel and Iraq opened opportunities to the country. Although this perspective can be at long-term double-edged, indeed a long period of instability in the region may simply scare away any investor. In the last decade, we had clear indication from Jordanian political leaders and especially from H. M. King Abdullah II of the willingness to promote Jordan as a Business hub in the region. Indeed the Kingdom can be a main gate for getting in business in Middle-East.

Through figures we will see the development of Import-Export business in the country in the last years and develop perspectives for the local market.

A Little Bit of History

The kingdom of Jordan was established after the First World War, during the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Jordan was drawn on the world map as a country between Syria, Iraq, Saudi and Palestine. The Hashemite Family received the rein of the country and had to federate a land mostly ruled by Bedouins and other tribes. The kingdom went through three major conflicts with its neighbour Israel, in 1948, 1967, 1972. It also faced huge immigration waves related directly to the regional conflicts.

From the establishment of the Kingdom, we have tracks of trades, especially vegetables and fruits from the north being exported to Saudi, Yemen and even Greece; we shall see that this trade still exist today.

Who would have imagined that in the 1960s Jordan was exporting wheat to Italy, supplying pasta factory with semolina while today the local production of wheat is not even sufficient for 20% of the local consumption?

Jordan Today's Figure

Population	6.5 million
GDP	$ 35 billion (2010 est.)
GDP Per Capita	$5,900(2010 est.)
Inflation Rate	15.5% (2010 est.)
Labour Force By Occupation	Agriculture 3.6%, Industry10.1%, Services 77.4%
Unemployment	14%
Exports	$6.521 billion (2010 estimation)
Export Goods	Phosphate, Potash, Fertilizers, Vegetable, Clothing, pharmaceuticals
Main Export Partners	USA 22.4%, Iraq 12.9%, India 8.3%, United Arab Emirates 7.8% Saudi Arabia 7.5%, and Syria 4.9%
Imports	$15.65 billion (2010 estimation)
Import Goods	Crude Oil, Textile, Fabrics, Machinery, Transport, Transport Equipment, and Manufactured Goods
Main Import Partners	Saudi Arabia 21%, China 12%, Germany 7%, United States 5%, Egypt 4%

Figure 2: Jordan Today's Figure

JORDAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The country has more free trade agreements than any other Arab State. The Kingdom signed free trade agreements with USA, Canada, France, Germany, Algeria, Turkey, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Mexico, India, and Morocco.

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A Special Relationship with America (Trade Agreements)

In 2009, Jordan and the United States secured their business relation by a new trade agreement which was fully implemented on January 1, 2010; it allows products to enter USA market duty-free if manufactured in Jordan. This program has succeeded in stimulating significant business cooperation between Jordan and America. In order to take advantage of the benefits for U.S. goods under this agreement, exporters will need to understand how to determine that their goods originate or qualify for preferential duty treatment under the U.S.-Jordan FTA Rules. Under the U.S.-Jordan FTA, Jordan is obligated to adopt stronger quality assurance measures, protection and enforcement provisions for copyrights, trademarks, patents, and trade secrets. *The FTA will also open the Jordanian services market to US companies*. These changes, among others, will provide US and Jordanian businesses with a market base that is more accessible and easily navigated.

Commodity Structure and Geographical Distribution of Imports

The developments of the commodity composition and the geographical distribution of imports in 2010 can be displayed as: a) The imports of petroleum products surged by JD 382.2 million, 128.3%, against a decrease of 19.6 percent in 2009 to reach JD 680.1 million. The markets of Saudi Arabia, UAE, and India were the main sources of these products; accounting for 59.9% of the imports of these products, b) The imports of crude oil increased by JD 258.8 million, 23.6% , against a decrease by 40.9 percentage in 2009 to total JD 1,357.1 million. This growth was an outcome of the rise in the prices of crude oil by 27.3%, despite the decrease in the imported quantities by 3.0 %. It's worth noting that most of the Kingdom's imports of crude oil came from Saudi Arabia, c) The imports of “plastic and articles thereof” were up by JD 45.9 million, or 17.0 %, to total JD 316.6 million, against a drop by 15.0 per cent in 2009. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, China, and the USA markets were the main sources of these imports; accounting for 62.3 per cent, d) The imports of "medical and pharmaceutical products" increased by JD 37.1 million, or 12.1 per cent against a drop of 4.5% in 2009 to total JD 343.9 million. The markets of Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Germany and France were the main sources of these imports; accounting for 42.1 per cent, e) The imports of "textile yarn, fabrics, and related products" were up by JD 22.3 million or 6.0 per cent to total JD 396.1 million against a drop of 19.3 per cent in 2009. The Chinese market was the main source of these products; accounting for 48.6 per cent, f) The imports of "iron and steel" increased by JD 10.8 million, or 2.4 per cent, to reach JD 464.9 million against a 25.4 per cent decrease in 2009. The markets of Ukraine, Turkey, and Russia accounted for 58.4 per cent of the total imports of these products, g) The imports of "transport equipment and spare parts" went down by JD 219.9 million, 19.2 per cent; to reach JD 925.4 million in 20 I O. The markets of South Korea, Japan and Germany accounted for 67.9 per cent of total imports of these products.

Accordingly, the imports of crude oil, "transport equipment and spare parts", petroleum products, "iron and steel", The External Sector "textile yarn, fabrics, and related products", "medical and pharmaceutical products", and "plastic thereof' topped the list pharmaceutical and articles of imported commodities; accounting for 41.0 per cent of the total imports compared with 39.0 per cent in 2009.

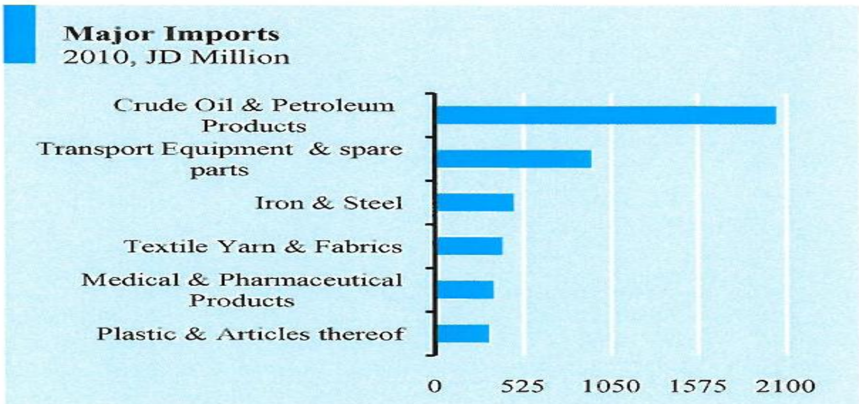

Figure 3: Major Imports 2010, JD Million

As for the commodity structure of imports according to the economic functions, the imports of "crude materials and intermediate goods" were up by JO 754.3 million, 15.0 per cent. Consequently, the relative importance of these imports to total imports was up from 49.8 per cent in 2009 to 52.9 per cent in 2010. Moreover, despite the 10 % increase; importation of consumption goods increased by JO 104.1 million, 3.4 per cent, their relative importance decreased to reach 29.1 per cent of total imports; down from 30.4 per cent in 2009.

Furthermore, the markets of Saudi Arabia, China, Germany, the USA, Egypt and South Korea were the main sources of the Kingdom's imports; accounting for 51. 0 per cent of total imports compared with 51.7 per cent in 2009.

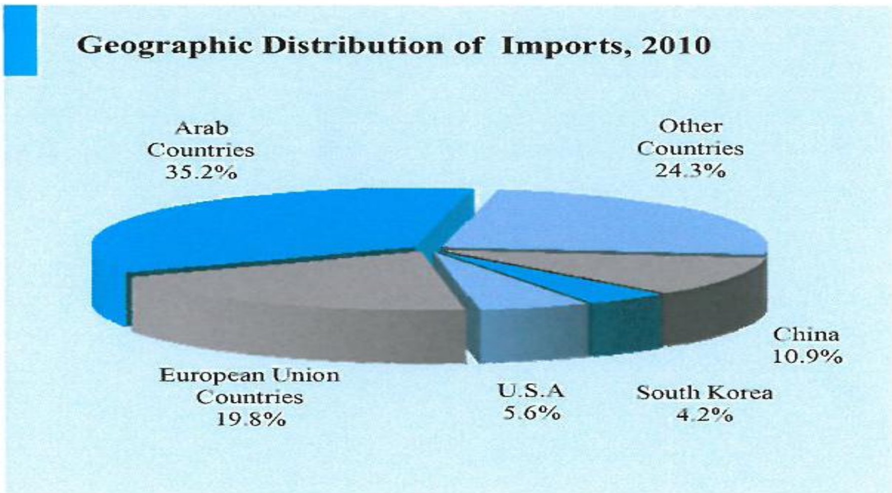

Figure 4: Geographic Distribution of Imports, 2010

JORDAN EXPORTS OVERVIEW

Jordan has witnessed a drastic jump in exports recently due to its continuous effort in trade liberalization and its on-going engagement in free trade practices. In 2010, total exports, including both goods and services, accounted for almost 9.892%, making Jordan No. 72 in the world ranking of export volume. The world's average of export volume was 7.69%, which is 2.02% less that Jordan's average.

The extraordinary performance of exports in recent years has been primarily due to the partnership and free trade agreements signed with various countries. The geographic distribution of domestic exports reveals that Arab countries remain the major destination for Jordanian exports with an average growth of 7% per year. More than half of all Jordanian exports to Arab countries go to Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Medical, pharmaceutical and vegetable products are the main exported items to the Arab countries. Also, exports to the US were ranked the highest growing by 41% per year between 2001 and 2006 but dropping by an average of 5% per annum between the year 2007 and 2010. This decline of the US imports of Jordanian goods could be attributed to the on-going recession in the US market. Jordan-made clothing is the major item demanded by the US importers. In addition, India is considered one of the major importers of Jordanian crude phosphate, potash and fertilizers. Exports to India have witnessed a significant increase recently, jumping in total value from 15.8 million JD in 2010 to 46.6 million JD in 2011.

Main Exports Partners and Economic Cartels during 2010-2011 (Value in Million JD)

Jordan mainly exports the following:

a. Vegetables (agro-food items)
b. Textiles and Apparels
c. Mining Minerals: Potash& Phosphates
d. Pharmaceutical products

Table 1: National Exports

National Exports			
Economic Cartels	2010	2011	Growth Average %
Greater Arab Trade Zone countries	173.6	184.0	6.0
Of which Iraq	57.4	67.0	16.7
North American Free Trade Agreement Countries	50.6	61.1	20.8
Of which USA	48.5	56.3	16.1
Non-Arab Asian countries	46.7	80.3	71.9
Of which India	15.8	46.6	194.9
European Union Countries	14.6	18.1	24.0
Of which Italy	5.5	7.7	40.0
Other Economic Cartels	39.4	40.7	3.3
Of which Ethiopia	13.0	20.1	54.6

**Source: Department of Statistics-Jordan

Table 2: The Most Important Exported Commodities during 2010-2011 (Value in Million JD)

National Exports			
Commodities	**2010**	**2011**	**Growth Average %**
Clothes	49.3	56.5	14.6
Crude potash	10.8	43.5	302.8
vegetables	43.9	54.8	24.8
Pharmaceutical products	25.2	24.3	-3.6
Fertilizers	30.7	30.2	-1.6
Crude Phosphates	22.7	31.5	38.8
Others	142.3	143.3	0.7
National Exports	**324.9**	**384.2**	**18.3**
Re-exports	**63.3**	**75.1**	**18.6**
Sum total of Exports (1)	**388.2**	**459.3**	**18.3**

**Source: Department of Statistics-Jordan

Vegetables (Agro-Food Items)

The unique climate and geography of Jordan has contributed significantly to the development of the agricultural productivity. The warm climate has enabled Jordan to export fresh fruits and vegetables all year around, increasing its competitive advantage over other markets. On the one hand, Jordan Valley offers a semi-tropical climate characterized by hot summers and warm winters and with its rich fertile soil, it has been best exploited for off the season crops production. On the other hand, the mountainous regions of Jordan receive the highest rainfall and is the most vegetated, making them suitable for olive tree plantations and olive oil production.

Thus, a fairly small but strong market presence has been established for Jordanian exports of livestock, fruits, vegetables, and olive oil mainly in the Gulf countries and Europe. A big jump took place between the years 2003 and 2006, when exports increased by 90% while imports growth ratio was 40%. This was an inevitable result due to the government adapted policies and practices to promote agricultural development in the rural areas where more than one fifth of the Jordanian population resides. The government has been keen to improve the after-tax profitability of investment in agricultural sector and to cut its trade-distorting subsidies.

According to the most recent statistics issued by Jordan Chamber of Commerce, the exports of agricultural products and livestock have increased from 352 million JD in 2008 to 607 million JD in 2009. This improvement demonstrates the superior quality of the Jordanian products. The agro-food exports vary to include tobacco, vegetable oil, and fresh produce such as tomatoes and cucumbers. 90% of such products are mainly exported and absorbed by Arab countries including Iraq ranking in the 1st place, followed by Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Syria. This sector also exports to Turkey and the US, being the dominant part of the international market.

Textile and Apparel

This sector consists mainly of textiles, garments, and leather products. Jordan attaches a considerable importance to this sector due to its high contribution to the total national exports and for its potential to attract many of the foreign investments. The Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) and US-Jordan Free Trade agreement have facilitated the entry of locally made products to the US market without imposing any duties or quotas. Access to the EU, Arab and Asian market has been fairly easy due to the signed free trade agreements between Jordan and these countries.

This sector includes the production of the following items:

a. Yarn and threads
b. Textiles and fabrics
c. Carpets
d. Embroideries
e. Knitted or crocheted fabrics
f. Garments and clothing accessories.
g. Non-clothing textiles: towels, bed sheets, curtains
h. Natural and synthetic leather.
i. Footwear and footwear accessories
j. Leather bags

Since these commodities are considered as part of the leading goods exported to the international market, they have been greatly affected by the fluctuation caused by the global recession. Since 2003, the US has become one of the major destinations for Jordanian exports absorbing 31% of total exports in 2006 and 28% in 2007, of which clothing is the main export. However, starting from 2008 with the on-going weakness in the US economy, and with the increasing number of countries forming free trade agreements with US, the domestic textile industry was facing a rough ride and an evident decline in its exports. According to the certificates of origin issued by the local chambers of industries, the total sector's exports of garments and leather products has fallen from 842 million dinars in 2008 to 719 million dinars in 2009, resulting in a shortfall in exports amounting to -14%. Yet, the US share of Jordanian clothing exports went up again this year to almost 565 million dinars, a boost by 12.9%, equivalent to 64 million from last year. This has reflected, of course, in the overall growth rate of exports for the whole textile industry with an increase of 14.6%.

Mining Minerals

Jordan's mining sector is one of most important strategic sector that contributes immensely to the country's economic development. It is considered to be a principal generator of national income. It accounts for 5% of the national GDP and 25% of the exports earnings. This sector is dependent mainly on the minerals extraction industries (including phosphate and potash) and construction materials (stone and marble).

Jordan is well known for its wealth in significant mineral resources that are exported unprocessed or that could be used as primary materials for other industries and processed goods. Some of the main minerals that are found abundantly in Jordan are: phosphate, potash, silica, uranium, copper, calcium carbonate (for cement manufacturing), granite and marble (for construction), silica (for glass making) and many more. Most of these minerals can be used as input material in the manufacturing industries to produce: fertilizers, chemical acids, ceramic, cosmetics, rock wool and lime and silicate bricks.

Table 3: Exports of Manufactured Goods

JD '000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006*	2007*
Vegetables	95,296.	99,480	127,691	158,658	162,142	272,988
Phosphates	96,446	90,810	117,731	119,341	112,894	138,291
Potash	136,744	144,832	163,505	196,138	181,242	227,551
Pharmaceuticals	142,791	130,971	158,452	198,624	210,785	300,131
Fertilizers	63,952	73,661	123,760	122,521	151,468	219,229
Machinery & Transport Equipment	101,175	77,083	103,018	127,147	157,035	171,101
Clothes	357,697	479,087	960	745,348	882,235	843,498
Total	1,556,748	1,675,075	2,306,626	2,570,222	2,929,310	3,179,578

**Preliminary Source: Central Bank of Jordan

Jordan is a major producer and exporter, in terms of the market share, of potash and phosphate. A fairly small share of both products, only 12% of tons mined is processed into fertilizers and other processed chemicals, while the rest 88% of potash and phosphate is exported unprocessed.

When it comes to phosphate production, Jordan is the sixth largest producer worldwide coming after US, China, Morocco, Russia and Tunisia. It is well known for its top quality due to the low content of the cancerous element Cadmium. Its reserves are estimated to be 943 million tons. However, Jordan occupies the fourth place worldwide in terms of its phosphate exportation since it is consuming a minor amount in the local production of fertilizers.

Potash is also another major component of Jordan total exports. This mineral is extracted from the Dead Sea by the Arab Potash Company (APC), which is considered the world's ninth largest potash producer, producing approximately 2 million tons per year. APC sales jumped substantially from (975.2) thousand MT in 2009 to (2.08) million MT in 2010, registering a record level since the beginning of production.

Table 4: Potash Production by country (Millions tons) 2010

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010
Russia/Belorussia	18.8	17.8	10.3	18.9
North America	19.2	18.1	8.2	16.7
Europe	6.1	5.7	3.5	5.2
Israel	3.6	3.6	3.3	4
China	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.3
Brazil/Chile	1.3	1.4	1.7	2.2
Jordan	1.8	2	1.2	1.9
Total	53.9	51.9	31.7	52.2

** Source: Jordan Investment Board

Pharmaceutical Products

The pharmaceutical sector has been one of the main pillars of the national economy. This sector was established in early sixties to become one of the fastest-growing among the country's manufacturing sectors. Its contribution accounts for 20% of the manufacturing sector of the GDP. Also, Jordan has become a leading competitor in the region and particularly export-intensive of treatment and pharmaceutical drugs, veterinary products, healthcare equipment and medical supplies, dead-sea products, herbal supplements and prescription glasses. More than 80% of its pharmaceutical production is going into exports.

Overall, the sector's exports have almost doubled up during the last 4 year with taking into consideration the slight decline in 2009. The trend in exports has been relatively the same with human drugs taking the lead, followed by veterinary drugs and other products such as (black mud, antiseptics, and gelatine capsules). Also, the major importers of such products are mostly Arab countries; including Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Lebanon, U.A.E., Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Kuwait, in addition to its foreign markets in Italy, Britain, Romania, and Russia.

Table 5: Exported Commodities

Exports by commodity	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2008 - 2010 average change
Pharmaceutical Products	296,359	421,221	497,481	470,889	593,985	**10.4%**

** Source: Jordan Investment Board

THE FUTURE OF JORDAN

Jordan has high hopes of a successfully and bright future hanging on the belief that uranium, oil shale and its service sector will lead the country to prosperity over the next few decades. Jordan's potential with indigenous minerals and shale oil will still rely on many factors some of which are dependent on other factors outside its control. These external factors will continue to play an important role in how Jordan's import and export industry develops in the future.

Oil Shale

The future of Jordan's reliance on imports of oil will continue for many years; however, not only the government but the people have great hopes for Jordan's potential oil industry in form of oil shale. Jordan's national security is one of the major reasons for the push to reduce oil imports and the development of its oil shale deposits. These are estimated to cover 60% of Jordan with between 50 to 70 billion tonnes of oil shale available for recovery.

Being a non-oil producing country, Jordan has the ability to greatly reduce its foreign dependence on oil imports by converting the oil shale into refined petroleum products or directly burn the partially refined shale to generate electricity. By refining the oil within Jordan, the country would benefit from the by-products of an oil producing country. This includes the ability to export plastics, rubbers, chemical and insecticides. The remaining shale also contains easily recoverable metals such as tungsten zinc, nickel, copper, and cobalt. Once these minerals have been extracted the remaining material can be used for cement manufacturing, road construction, and soil conditioning.

Oil shale provides a great opportunity for the country; however, according to current projections oil will need to remain higher than 60 dollars per barrel for extraction to be profitable. (Alali 2006) Therefore, as long as oil consumption and demand world-wide remains high, the country could potentially reduce its imports of oil by 14% and increase its exports of oil related products. (Carlisle 2010)

Uranium

Uranium, a chemical element typically used as the fuel for nuclear power plants has been located in Jordan in commercial quantities. In an additional effort to curb its energy imports, Jordan has announced that it would seek assistance from specialist companies to potentially extract and obtain uranium for its own future nuclear use and sale on the world market.

Jordan is the only Middle Eastern country with uranium and therefore could potentially export the prized commodity at market rates of $55.00/per pound. However, the true benefit to Jordan would be to use the product to fuel a proposed nuclear power plant, which is part of the countries plan on subduing the increased need for imported energy supplies. With estimates of around 200,000 tonnes, the country would have enough to secure long-term fuelling of a reactor, which would require around 200 tonnes per year. This would supply Jordan with enough electricity not only to meet her own needs but also to export electricity to her neighbouring Countries.

Jordan's potential decrease of oil imports (with the production of nuclear energy) will not come easy to the country. Since uranium can be used to build weapons, majority of countries in the region are concerned with possibility of a neighbouring country having such a dangerous chemical in its possession. The country has been advised that if it would like to continue receiving benefits on other American financed investments within the country it would be required to work with Israel on the exploration and development of its uranium – an issue in which the country (Jordan) is not ready to accept.

Agriculture

As with any society, Jordanian population require food substance for sustainability. With Jordan's population increasing at an alarming rate in part due to refugees influx by those seeking shelter from current crises taking place within their own countries. This increase has put additional pressure on Jordan and its food requirements. The lack of development in agriculture, coupled with the high population growth rate, of 2.8% per year, restricts the ability of the agricultural sector to meet growing local demand.

The Jordan Valley is the centre of Jordan's agriculture production, the area focuses on the production of tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, and citrus fruits, melons, cabbages, as well as (with the aid of drip irrigation) bananas, potatoes and onions. However, Jordan is required to import the majority of its wheat and flour, red meat, and fruits. Jordan is highly unlikely to change these requirements in the future due to its inability to develop the agricultural sector to its full potential.

The future of Jordan's agriculture related imports are likely to increase for several reasons, e.g. The increase in population, a desire to increase production of livestock, which requires imported grains, and Jordan's inability to increase its production of wheat or grain.

While Jordan does have the ability to expand it need requirements for such products as chicken and eggs, it will also require the country to increase its imports of feed, which is already 75% of the costs to raise livestock within the country. Knowing these factors, the government has advised that it will continue to seek out opportunities such as the Canadian Jordan Free Trade Agreement, which will remove a 30% tariff on imported agriculture goods, this will not only provide required supplies to the country but also at much more competitive prices. (Agriculture 2010)

Political Future of Jordan's Import and Export Future

Jordan lies in the heart of large politically unstable region, which includes Syria, Israel, Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. Due to this uncertainty, Jordan would like to control its import and export business without the reliance on its neighbours; however, the costs associated are damaging to the country and to the profitability of the import export business.

Currently, Syria is a major trade route for Jordan's exports to Turkey and Europe; however, due to the instability and the crisesin Syria Jordan is losing agricultural exports due to the time required to wait at the Syrian border. Previously, agricultural exports were allowed to cross Syria without delay. The country is currently trying to secure alternative routes via Iraq to ensure that its exports will timely reach their required destinations. Jordan is also worried that it could be forced by the West to completely stop using Syria for any export business. This, if it happens will increase the costs of all of Jordanian imports and exports that would have typically travel via Syria's borders.

Jordan currently receives a large portion of its gas for electricity via a pipeline between Jordan and Egypt; however, due to extremist activities in the region the pipeline continues to be destroyed, causing Jordan to obtain more expensive gas from other sources or having to use its reserves. This costs the country up to three million dollars each day that the pipeline is not active (because of the country having to purchase the gas via the international markets). In order to protect itself in the future, Jordan is currently trying to secure a more stable gas supply from Qatar by possibly building and offshore LNG plant. (Luck 2011) In addition to the possible Qatar agreement, Jordan has secured an agreement to import 30,000 tonnes of heavy crude from Iraq and is currently in the process of developing the logistical necessities to obtain the oil.

CONCLUSION

The international trade sector in Jordan is growing rapidly due to several factors; first, Jordan has more trade agreements with other countries than any other Arab Nation, secondly, due to the persistent regional instability Jordan (which is relatively peaceful) is emerging as a stable alternative domain for trading.

Jordan will continue its exports of Potash, Phosphates, as well as likely to expand its current manufacturing exports. In recent years, Jordan has also been able to embark on the production of capital goods with the assistance of countries like the US. If political ties remain strong these exports could also increase as time goes on. Other exports such as fruits and vegetables will remain high for several years to come; however, other food exportation may continue to decline due to increase in local population growth.

Imports will remain high for the country; however, if Jordan's plans for nuclear, wind and solar power come to fruition, the percentages will likely change dramatically. For example, Jordan's current importation of oil and gas for energy use will decrease with these changes. However, other imports such as cereals and other grains will likely increase due to increase in population and increase in livestock production. Importation in sectors such as machinery and replacement parts will increase in order for Jordan to expand its current manufacturing Capacity.

Jordan, overall, will continue to have a developing import and export business sector due to the continued acceptance of globalization. The country will remain a regional hub for services in imports and exports as well, due to its educated population and open marketEconomic policies with a stable banking sector. Also, as a result of instability in the region, Jordan will also likely to see an increase in its manufacturing sector as investors seek a stable alternative market in the region.

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