

The lockdown hit to world trade volumes

As April was affected by the most widespread and stringent lockdown measures, trade volumes were dragged down by disruptions to production and logistics, as well as less demand for imports worldwide



Source: Shutterstock

The Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis world trade monitor data [published today](#) show world trade volumes in April were down 16.2% on a year earlier, having fallen 12.1% between March and April.

Trade volumes are set to make a gradual recovery as lockdown measures ease around the world, but there are headwinds from Covid-19 precautions at ports, as well as export restrictions on medical goods and some food products.

The severity and global reach of lockdown measures suggests that 2Q will be the low point of 2020 for world trade volumes, but this depends on how much openness economies can sustain without needing to go into lockdown again. Even if the recovery starts from next month, the steep fall into April from already low volumes in 1Q (down 3.4% on a year earlier) indicate world trade is on track to be more than 10% lower than in 2019, broadly in line with our [base case](#), the updated forecasts by the [WTO](#), and the [IMF](#).