

PROMOTING THE EXPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FROM A VIETNAMESE TRADING FIRM TO ASIAN MARKETS: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Asia has emerged as a strategic growth arena for Vietnamese agricultural exports, supported by strong regional demand and favorable trade agreements. This study examines a Vietnamese trading firm's export-promotion practices to Asian markets during 2021–2024, combining theoretical perspectives on export promotion with an in-depth evaluation of real-world execution. Areas analyzed include customer finding, negotiation and contract implementation, after-sales service, and performance indicators such as revenue growth, contract volume, and product structure. Findings show notable progress, particularly in fresh fruit and dried noodle exports, yet constraints persist in digital marketing reach, operational capacity, and customer-retention systems. External opportunities—especially tariff preferences under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—offer a favorable environment for further market penetration. Strategic recommendations focus on enhancing digital marketing, strengthening market research capabilities, building long-term customer relationships, and investing in organizational resources. These measures aim to boost competitiveness, raise contract value and repeat purchase rates, and expand market share in Asia toward 2030.

Keyword: Export promotion, Agricultural trade, RCEP, B2B marketing, Asian markets

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of global economic integration, Asia has increasingly affirmed its role as a key export market for Vietnam. With its large population and rising consumption demand, the region is not only a vital trade partner but also a major contributor to Vietnam's export turnover. In 2024, total trade between Vietnam and Asia reached an estimated USD 497.3 billion, with exports accounting for USD 187.1 billion [1]. Asia remains the largest consumer of Vietnam's agricultural products, representing 48.2% of total agricultural, forestry, and fishery export value—significantly higher than the Americas (23.7%) and Europe (11.3%).

Despite this potential, agricultural exports from the studied firm to Asia accounted for only 18.11% of its total exports in 2024, lower than Europe's 26.88%. Certain products, such as durian, have seen significant growth—from 2.46% in 2021 to 8.5% in 2024—yet substantial opportunities for market expansion remain. These figures highlight the need to optimize export strategies, diversify distribution channels,

strengthen competitiveness, and make full use of trade agreements such as the RCEP and CPTPP.

This study applies the theoretical framework of export promotion to evaluate the firm's agricultural export activities to the Asian market, identify influencing factors, and develop strategies for improvement. The research tasks include systematizing theoretical foundations, reviewing the firm's profile and current practices, analyzing internal and external factors, assessing achievements and shortcomings, and identifying opportunities and challenges. Based on these findings, the study sets development goals and orientations and proposes actionable solutions aimed at enhancing export performance in the Asian market for the 2025–2030 period.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. Theories of promoting exports

Promoting exports is broadly defined as a set of strategic activities aimed at expanding a firm's or nation's presence in foreign markets, increasing sales volumes, and enhancing product value

through innovation, quality improvement, and market adaptation [2, 3, 4]. At the business level, it involves tools such as market research, branding, trade missions, and participation in international fairs, combined with compliance to international standards and partnerships with foreign distributors. Effective export promotion improves competitiveness, diversifies revenue sources, secures long-term contracts, and supports sustainable growth by adapting to global trends.

At the national level, export promotion drives economic growth by boosting export revenue, creating jobs, and enabling industrial restructuring toward sectors with comparative advantages. It strengthens foreign currency reserves, improves the trade balance, and enhances international cooperation, contributing to a country's global economic standing [3, 5].

For companies, it lowers market-entry barriers, increases access to trade intelligence and technology, and yields measurable gains such as sales growth and productivity improvements [5]. Overall, export promotion is both a growth catalyst and a resilience strategy in the international marketplace.

2.2. Content of promoting exports

Export promotion encompasses a series of interconnected measures aimed at enhancing a company's ability to access, compete, and grow in international markets [6, 3]. At the enterprise level, these include:

Customer finding – Conducting market research, segmenting buyers, and using tools like trade fairs, online advertising, partner networks, and data analytics to expand the international customer base.

Negotiation and contracting – Ensuring mutually agreed terms on quality, packaging, delivery, documentation, and payment [6], supported by skilled negotiators and diverse communication methods.

Export capacity and supply readiness – Building reliable supplier networks, securing logistics infrastructure, and managing seasonal or demand fluctuations to fulfill orders on time and to standard.

Compliance with technical standards – Meeting SPS/TBT measures and certifications (e.g.,

GlobalG.A.P., HACCP), ensuring traceability, and staying updated on regulatory changes.

Contract execution – Managing licensing, quality inspection, customs clearance, transport, payment, and dispute resolution to deliver as promised [6].

Contract liquidation – Completing payments, evaluating performance, and documenting lessons learned for future improvement.

After-sales service – Providing warranty, technical support, training, and regular follow-up to strengthen customer loyalty and long-term cooperation [7].

Together, these activities form a comprehensive export-promotion strategy that not only increases sales but also improves competitiveness, market responsiveness, and brand reputation in the global arena.

2.3. Factors affecting export promotion activities in enterprises

Export promotion in enterprises is shaped by a combination of external and internal factors that jointly determine their ability to penetrate and sustain a presence in international markets. Externally, the international political and legal environment plays a decisive role: stable governance, predictable trade policies, and participation in free trade agreements reduce barriers and facilitate long-term strategic planning, while instability, protectionism, and sudden policy shifts introduce uncertainty and costs [8]. Exchange rate fluctuations further influence competitiveness and profit margins, making effective risk management essential. Transparent trade regulations and streamlined customs procedures lower compliance costs and improve scalability, whereas high tariffs and technical barriers diminish the return on promotional investment. At the national level, macro-environmental dimensions identified in the PESTEL framework—political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental—shape promotional capacity. Political stability and economic strength support resource allocation for global branding and trade missions; technological adoption, especially in digital marketing and analytics, enhances reach; legal harmonization with international standards reduces risk; and growing global demand for sustainable products creates opportunities for eco-friendly exporters

[9]. Internally, three pillars determine a firm's capacity to promote exports effectively: human resources, capital, and facilities. A skilled, export-ready workforce improves product quality, compliance, and targeted market engagement. Adequate financial resources enable sustained investment in international branding, trade fairs, and promotional campaigns, while insufficient capital constrains outreach and visibility. Finally, owning and managing storage and transport infrastructure strengthens logistical control, reduces costs, and improves delivery reliability, thereby enhancing the firm's reputation and trust with foreign buyers. Aligning promotional strategies with favorable external conditions, while building robust internal capabilities, is therefore critical to achieving sustained export growth and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

3. CURRENT SITUATION OF PROMOTING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT EXPORTS BY A VIETNAMESE TRADING FIRM TO ASIAN MARKETS (2021–2024)

3.1. The export business situation of a company in 2021 - 2024 period

Over the 2021–2024 period, the studied Vietnamese trading firm, operating exclusively in the export sector, demonstrated sustained growth despite volatile global trade conditions. Total export revenue increased from VND 58.97 billion in 2021 to VND 78.99 billion in 2024, representing a compound growth rate of approximately 9.5% per annum. Net profit rose from VND 5.9 billion to VND 10.36 billion over the same period, yielding an improvement in after-tax profit margin from 10.0% to over 13.0%. This performance reflects the firm's capacity to adapt to external disruptions, including geopolitical tensions, supply chain instability, and fluctuating global demand.

3.1.1. Product Structure Shift

Initially, textiles accounted for the largest share of export revenue (48.43% in 2021), but their relative contribution declined due to heightened competition from low-cost producers, notably in Bangladesh. In contrast, agricultural exports—particularly fresh durian—experienced accelerated growth following policy changes under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and China's 2022 authorization of official durian imports from

Vietnam. Between 2021 and 2024, durian export value increased by 237.84%, driving an 81.5% overall growth in the fresh agricultural segment. This shift indicates a strategic realignment toward high-growth agricultural categories while maintaining textile exports as a complementary revenue source.

3.1.2. Market Distribution

Export revenues were concentrated in Europe and Asia, with Europe maintaining the largest market share (~40% annually) and Asia contributing consistently between 31–32%. Revenue from Asia increased by 36.6% over the period, supported by surging demand for agricultural products, especially durian. The Americas and Australia contributed 20% and 7–8%, respectively, providing diversification benefits. Notably, Asia's growth trajectory was reinforced by tariff reductions, simplified customs procedures, and expanding distribution networks within ASEAN and China.

3.1.3. Strategic Implications

The period under review reflects a gradual structural transformation in the firm's export portfolio, with agricultural products emerging as a growth engine in response to favorable trade agreements and evolving market demand. To sustain momentum, the firm may need to further enhance value-added processing in agriculture, pursue product innovation in textiles, and deepen market penetration in Asia to leverage its demonstrated growth potential.

3.2. The current status in promoting the export of agricultural products to the asian market (2021–2024)

Between 2021 and 2024, Vietnamese agricultural exporters adopted a multi-faceted strategy to enhance market penetration in Asia, leveraging the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as a pivotal trade facilitator. The approach integrated customer acquisition, negotiation, capacity building, compliance with technical standards, contract execution, settlement procedures, and post-sales services.

3.2.1. Customer Acquisition and Retention

Following the signing of RCEP in late 2020, exporters initiated targeted market research to engage key destinations such as China, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN countries. A database

exceeding 2,500 potential leads was compiled via B2B platforms (e.g., Alibaba, Global Sources, EC21) and trade intelligence systems (e.g., TradeData.Pro). Engagement methods included personalized offers, sampling, and region-specific communication platforms (WeChat, LINE, Zalo). Retention rates improved from 68.5% to 75.3%, and repeat purchases from 83.1% to 87.4%, underscoring the long-term effectiveness of relationship-based selling.

3.2.2. Negotiation and Contract Signing

Negotiation processes were centralized, addressing key trade terms such as pricing, delivery conditions, quality inspection protocols, and payment modalities. Digital signatures shortened processing time from 7–10 business days to 24–48 hours, accelerating deal closure. For high-value contracts, virtual inspections or in-person visits to production sites enhanced trust prior to signing.

3.2.3. Export Capacity and Supply Readiness

Although exporters maintained cooperative-based sourcing for products such as vermicelli, lychee, and durian, supplier relationships often lacked formal, long-term contracts, limiting scalability during peak demand. The absence of in-house warehousing and cold chain infrastructure necessitated reliance on third-party logistics providers, reducing control over supply chain stability.

3.2.4. Compliance with Technical Standards

Exporters prioritized compliance with market-specific regulations, including GlobalG.A.P., HACCP, and General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) certification. In 2022, limited availability of GACC-certified suppliers increased procurement costs; however, by 2023, expanded certification coverage improved supply chain resilience and reduced reliance on costly new partnerships [6].

3.2.5. Execution of Export Contracts

Post-contract execution entailed coordinated sourcing, product inspection, customized packaging, and documentation under relevant FTAs such as RCEP and ASEAN–China. Strategic partnerships with logistics firms ensured competitive freight rates and minimized delays. Nevertheless, supplier-side packaging

infrastructure remained a constraint in meeting stringent Asian import requirements.

3.2.6. Contract Liquidation

Payment management emphasized financial risk mitigation through Letters of Credit for high-value or high-risk markets, while Telegraphic Transfers were used for established partners. Structured receivables monitoring maintained liquidity and reduced overdue debts.

3.2.7. After-Sales Service

Post-shipment follow-ups were conducted within 7–10 days to assess product quality, packaging compliance, and logistics efficiency. Key accounts received value-added services such as harvest forecasts, regulatory updates, and documentation support. Customer satisfaction in Asian markets rose from 78.6% to 91.7% over the four-year period, demonstrating the effectiveness of proactive, tailored post-sales engagement (Haryadi et al., 2022).

Overall, the integrated promotion framework—rooted in proactive market engagement, regulatory alignment, operational coordination, and sustained after-sales care—enabled Vietnamese agricultural exporters to strengthen competitiveness and secure a more resilient position in Asian markets despite persistent structural limitations in supply chain capacity.

3.3. Evaluation of Agricultural Export Promotion to Asian Markets (2021–2024)

Over the 2021–2024 period, the firm in this case study recorded steady and sustainable growth in agricultural exports to Asian markets, supported by effective exploitation of trade liberalization frameworks such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Export revenue rose from VND 9.73 billion in 2021 to VND 14.30 billion in 2024, with the most significant increase in 2022 (+11.08%). This surge was driven by tariff reductions on 64% of product lines between Vietnam and partner economies under RCEP and the official authorization of Vietnamese durian exports to China in July 2022 [10]. Durian quickly became the leading export product, growing from 2.36% to 46.99% of total export value by 2024, indicating a strategic reorientation toward high-demand fresh produce.

The number of export contracts increased from 16 in 2021 to 29 in 2024. The strongest growth

occurred in 2022 (25%), reflecting early preparation and market entry strategies that leveraged emerging trade advantages. From 2023 onward, growth stabilized around 20–20.8% annually, reflecting consistent expansion despite intensifying competition from other regional exporters such as Thailand, the Philippines, and China [11]. In parallel, the Net Customer Growth Rate (NCGR) remained positive throughout the study period—18.18% in 2022, 7.69% in 2023, and peaking at 21.43% in 2024. This growth was accompanied by a steady increase in customer satisfaction, rising from 78.6% to 91.7%, which suggests a strong correlation between high-quality after-sales service and sustainable client retention.

Despite these achievements, challenges emerged. The average contract value declined from VND 0.61 billion in 2021 to VND 0.49 billion in 2024. This trend, while slowing over time (from –11.12% in 2022 to –3.47% in 2024), reflected initial supply capacity constraints and a cautious approach favoring smaller, manageable orders during early market penetration. Another structural limitation was the concentration of exports in a single product—durian—leaving the firm vulnerable to policy changes or import restrictions in its key destination market. While other products such as vermicelli maintained steady growth, items like lychee saw declining shares due to less favorable tariff reductions under RCEP and weaker market competitiveness.

The underlying causes of these constraints stemmed from both internal and external factors. Internally, the absence of a structured international marketing strategy, limited investment in product diversification, and underdeveloped upstream supply partnerships restricted the ability to secure larger-value contracts. Externally, competition from major regional suppliers with advanced logistics and established relationships exerted pressure on both pricing and delivery performance, particularly in premium markets such as Japan and South Korea where import regulations are increasingly stringent.

In conclusion, the case study highlights a firm that has successfully navigated post-pandemic recovery, leveraged trade agreements, and expanded its customer network in the Asian agricultural export sector. However, sustaining this momentum will require diversification of the

export portfolio, strategic enhancement of supply chain capacity, and investment in targeted brand-building and market development activities. Such measures will not only reduce overreliance on a single product but also strengthen the firm's resilience against external shocks, thereby ensuring long-term growth and competitiveness in the dynamic Asian marketplace.

4. CHAPTER 3: ORIENTATIONS AND SOLUTIONS FOR PROMOTING AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO THE ASIAN MARKET WITH A VISION TOWARD 2030

4.1. Opportunities and Challenges in Promoting Agricultural Exports to the Asian Market until 2030

The business in this case study is entering 2025 with favorable prospects for expanding agricultural exports across Asia. Growth is supported by abundant domestic supply, rising global food demand, and shifting consumption trends. China remains a central market, with forecast annual growth in fruit and seafood consumption of 6.64% and 7.56% respectively for 2024–2029 [12]. Since 2024, the firm and other Vietnamese exporters have expanded distribution through Chinese e-commerce and social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, Taobao, JD.com), enhancing direct market access [13]. The ASEAN market also offers untapped potential, benefitting from lower logistics costs compared to distant markets, while broader trends such as rising demand for organic and certified products, cross-border e-commerce growth, and traceability technologies like AI and blockchain create additional opportunities.

However, the path forward is challenged by increasingly strict import requirements in key Asian markets, with heightened sanitary, phytosanitary, and traceability standards. Regional competition is intensifying as Thailand, Indonesia, and India advance in both price and quality. Limitations in cold storage, specialized transport, and high logistics costs reduce competitiveness. Climate change, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks further threaten supply stability. Overdependence on the Chinese market adds vulnerability, as policy changes or quarantine rules could disrupt trade flows. To ensure resilience and sustainable growth toward 2030, diversification into ASEAN, South Korea, Japan, and the Middle East is essential, alongside

investment in infrastructure, quality compliance, and market development.

4.2. Objectives and Orientations for Promoting Agricultural Exports to the Asian Market

The case study firm sets a long-term goal of achieving sustainable, high-value export growth through deeper market penetration, product competitiveness, and operational efficiency. By 2030, exports to Asia are targeted to comprise at least 45% of total revenue, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12–15%. This will be supported by ensuring that 100% of exported products meet international certifications such as GlobalGAP, HACCP, and GACC, alongside a 15% reduction in logistics costs through improved infrastructure and strategic partnerships. Digital transformation is central to the strategy, with 40% of B2B sales expected to occur via online platforms like Alibaba and Global Sources, complemented by blockchain-based traceability for full supply chain transparency.

To realize these objectives, the firm's orientation emphasizes market expansion into Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN through active trade promotion, leveraging free trade agreements such as RCEP and CPTPP, and building long-term buyer relationships. Product quality will be enhanced via investment in modern packaging, cold storage, and processing facilities. Logistics efficiency will be improved by optimizing supply chain coordination and expanding partnerships with international freight and cold storage providers. Digital innovation will not only broaden market reach but also strengthen trust with global buyers, positioning the company as a competitive and reliable Vietnamese agricultural exporter in Asia by 2030.

4.3. Proposed Solutions for Promoting Agricultural Exports to the Asian Market

The case study company plans to address existing internal and external limitations through four integrated solutions. First, internationalizing marketing channels aims to build brand awareness and increase high-value contract acquisition. This includes launching an English-language website, creating bilingual corporate materials, producing professional product videos, and establishing active profiles on platforms like LinkedIn and Alibaba. The approach leverages multilingual communication to improve buyer trust and conversion rates.

Second, expanding and standardizing the supplier network focuses on building strategic partnerships with raw material providers. By assessing current suppliers, signing master contracts or MOUs, and offering support policies such as early payment incentives and quality training, the company seeks to secure consistent, high-quality supply and reduce vulnerability to seasonal or urgent order risks.

Third, establishing a Market Research and Product Development (R&D) unit will reduce over-reliance on durian exports by identifying opportunities for other products with strong market potential. Initially operating as a cross-functional task force, this unit will analyze trends, optimize packaging, and coordinate promotional pilots for selected products, with the aim of diversifying the export portfolio and increasing resilience.

Finally, optimizing logistics coordination and enhancing data analytics capabilities will improve competitiveness in B2B exports. Strategic partnerships with cold storage-equipped logistics providers, adopting batch consolidation shipping models, and training staff in tools like Power BI will enhance delivery efficiency, lower costs, and strengthen responsiveness to market fluctuations. Together, these solutions aim to improve operational capacity, market positioning, and long-term sustainability in the Asian agricultural export sector.

5. CONCLUSION

Between 2021 and 2024, the case study company achieved notable progress in promoting agricultural exports to the Asian market, focusing on products like durian, arrowroot vermicelli, and Chu noodles. However, its market share remains below potential due to technical trade barriers, intense regional competition, and internal limitations in export promotion.

Key internal challenges include the absence of a comprehensive international marketing strategy, over-reliance on durian, lack of a dedicated market research and product development department, and underdeveloped logistics and data analytics capabilities. Externally, the company faces fierce competition from exporters in Thailand and China, alongside increasingly stringent import regulations from target markets.

To overcome these constraints, four strategic solutions are proposed: (1) internationalize

marketing and build a strong brand through multilingual digital platforms; (2) expand and standardize a strategic supplier network to ensure consistent quality and supply; (3) establish a dedicated market research and product development function to optimize the export portfolio; and (4) improve logistics coordination and enhance data analytics for better responsiveness and cost efficiency.

By implementing these measures, the company can leverage internal strengths and favorable external conditions to expand market share, boost trade value, and position itself as a leading Vietnamese agricultural exporter to Asia by 2030.

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