# Oil, money flows and public debt – threats to Vietnam's macro-stability

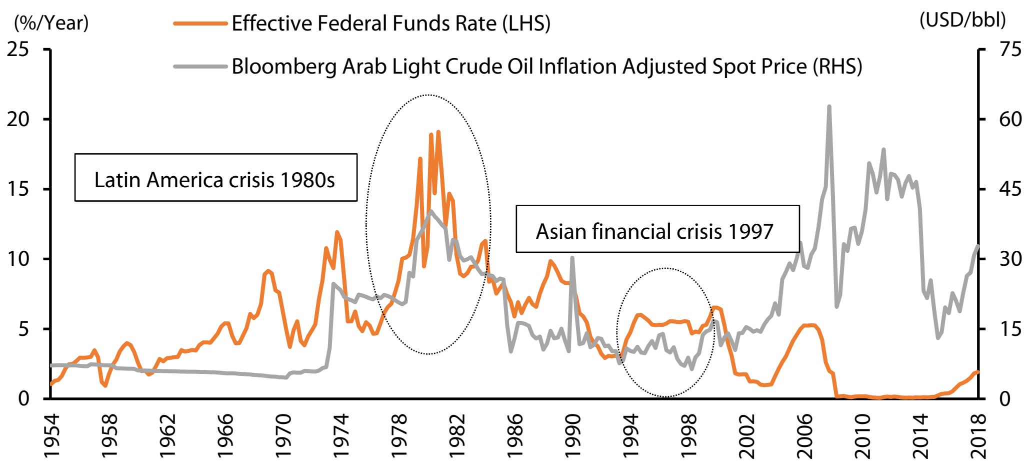
Currently, there are significant fundamental changes in the global economy. Small and medium emerging and developing countries are likely to be the most vulnerable. That is due to their weaker buffer and resistance mechanisms against external risks. In this report, we look at the most important factors and the early warnings for Vietnam.

- Rising oil prices, reversing money flows and increasing public debt, which were the root of historical crisis. Such issues have created significant fluctuations in global financial market since the middle of the year.
- Vietnamese lawmakers and investors need to keep an eye on external debt, cost-push inflation as well as capital market openness.

In our opinion, Vietnam's economy is vulnerable to mid- and long-term external risks. In 2019, concerns about cost-push inflation, always driving the decisions of policymakers, will be a key point as basic good prices are ready to go up.

The issue of surging short-term external debts is also to be highlighted. External debt by corporates is significantly moving up. While the growth of foreign money flows is essential for the economy, the government also needs to extend the role of the domestic financial market in order to absorb such flows.

**Figure 1: Effective federal funds rate and crude oil price**




*Source: Bloomberg, Rong Viet Securities*

Bernard Lapointe – Head of Research

bernard.lapointe@vdsc.com.vn

Tu Vu

tu.va@vdsc.com.vn

## MAIN CONTENTS

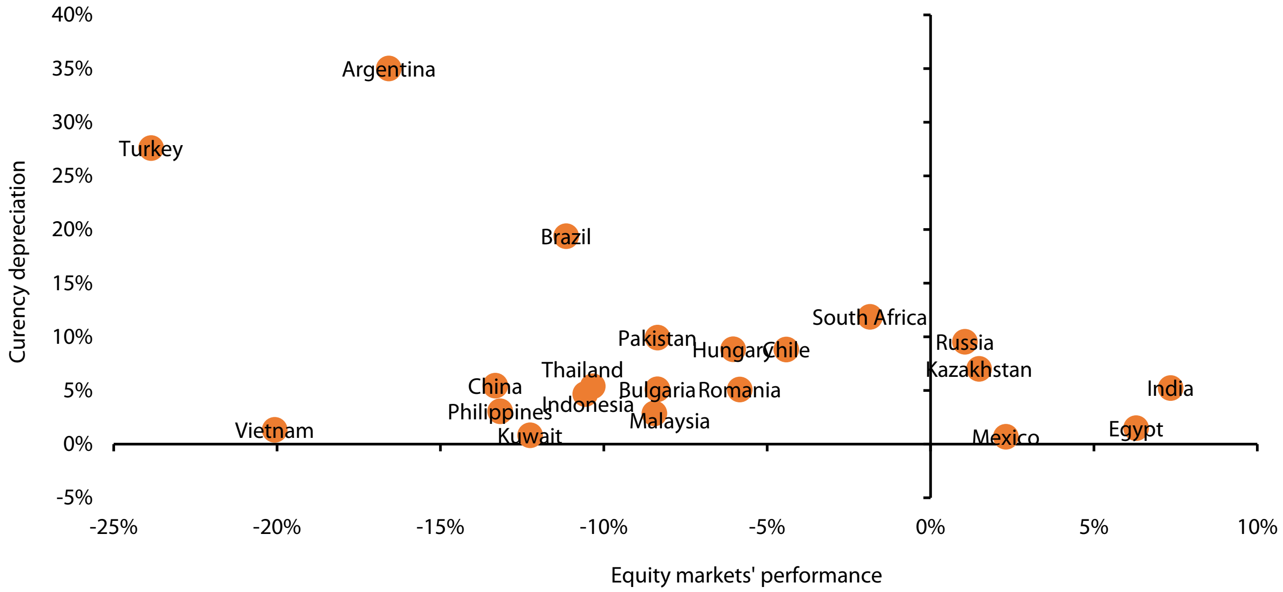
# VIETNAM's ECONOMY

- Oil, money flows and public debt
- Vietnam is vulnerable to mid- and long-term external risks

**Oil, money flows and public debt**

Turbulence in financial markets started a few months ago, highlighted by significant currency depreciation and drop in equity prices. Argentina, Brazil and Turkey saw their currencies loose value due to the to their mounting foreign currency denominated debt.

**Figure 2: Financial markets in the second quarter of 2018**



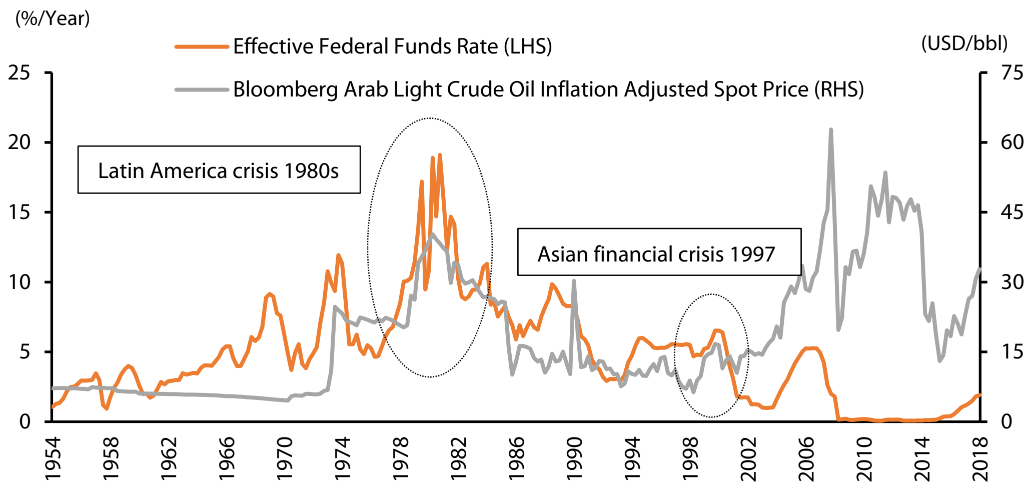

*Source: Bloomberg, Rong Viet Securities*

From our point of view, oil prices, money flows and public debt, the root of many crisis in the past, once again threaten the financial stability of the world.

The FED's monetary normalization was the starting point. While the process of reducing its balance sheet is moving on, the cost of money has been going up weighted by step-by-step interest rate hikes. The pressure on global investment flow is fueled by the US tax reform. This fuels repatriation of dollars into the US. However, the escalation of trade tensions is a key point as its incalculable effects means a temporary stop of money inflow into emerging and developing markets. Hence, investors need some time to adjust to all this.

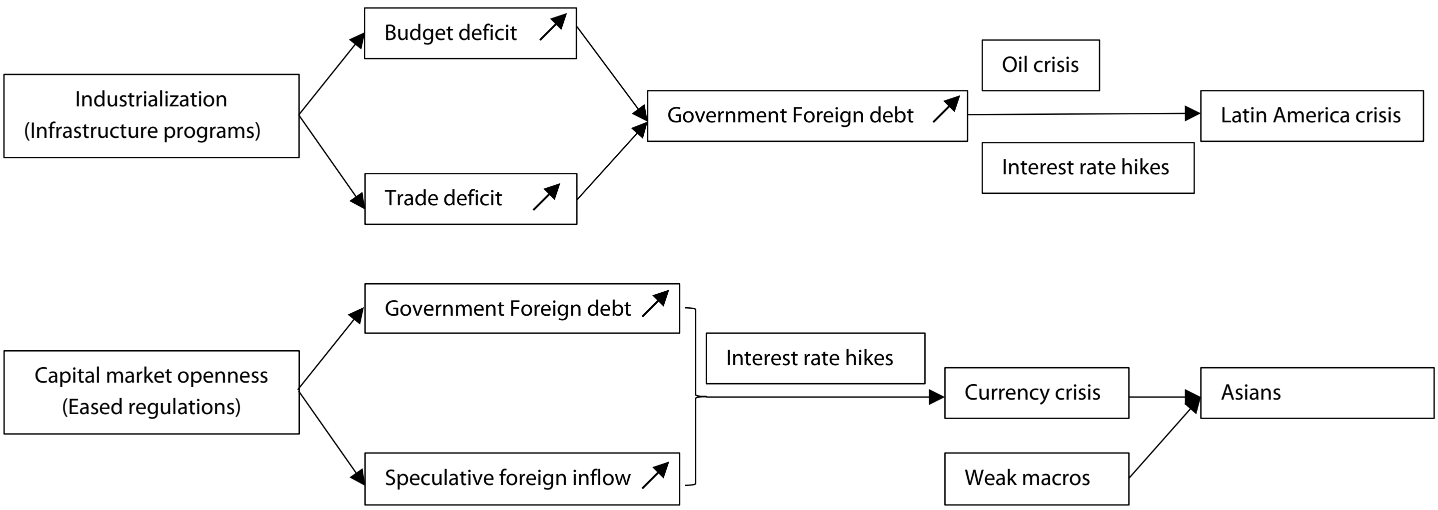
Among significant fundamental changes, rising of oil prices are adding to uncertainty. There are more and more countries stopping importing Iran's crude oil.

**Figure 3: Effective federal funds rate and crude oil price**



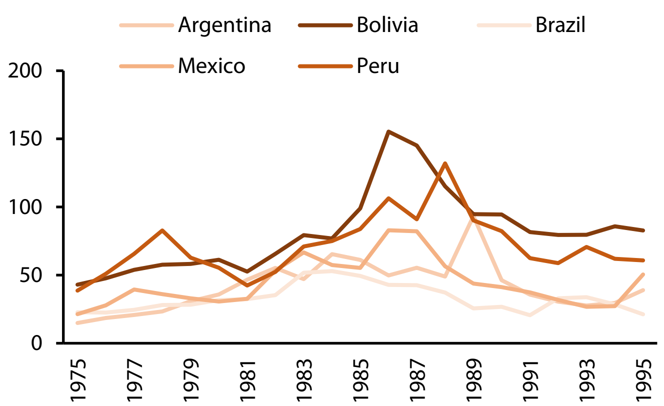

*Source: Bloomberg, Rong Viet Securities*

**Figure 4: Latin America crisis in the 1980s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997**



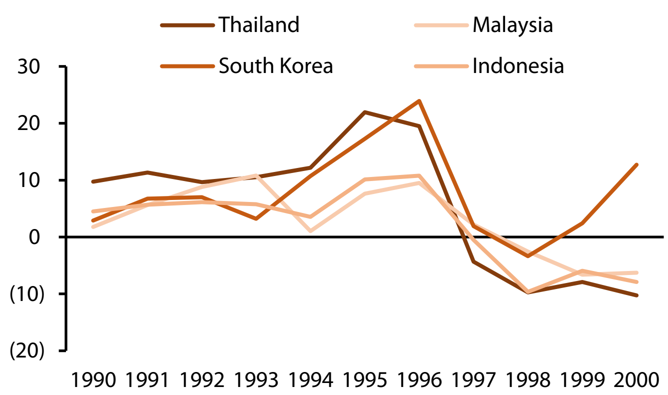

*Source: Rong Viet Securities*

**Figure 5: External debt/GNI (%)**




*Source: WB, Rong Viet Securities*

**Figure 6: Financial account (USD Bn)**




*Source: WB, ADB, Rong Viet Securities*

Winston Churchill said that those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it. In our point of view, there are at least three insights to get from history, including 1) tight control of external debt and rising international reserves, 2) keep an eye on household consumption and inflation, especially cost-push inflation from oil prices and 3) awareness of high capital market openness.

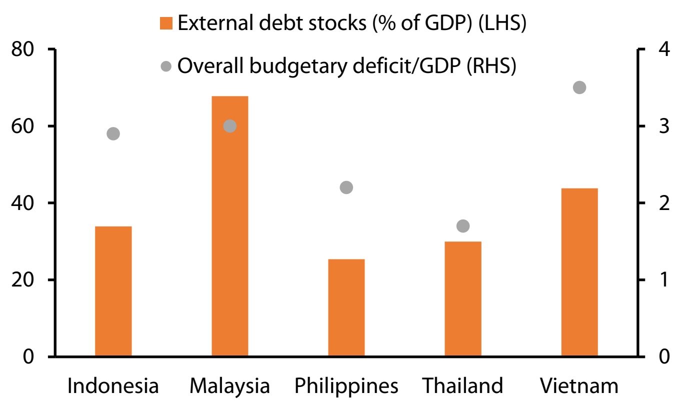
**Vietnam is vulnerable to mid- and long-term external risks**

Vietnam's external debt reached 48% of GDP, close to the limit of 50% of GDP. In the last 10 years, Vietnam's external debt tripled. Notably, corporate's short-term external debt surged last year. Meanwhile, Vietnam's international reserves to import ratio is the lowest level among regional countries.

However, there is no clear signals of controlling the budgetary deficit. The ratio of budget deficit to GDP has risen to 3.7%. It is the highest level compared to other regional countries. Vietnam is benefiting from a positive current account, mainly due to FDI corporations. It is protecting the economy against external risks in the short term.

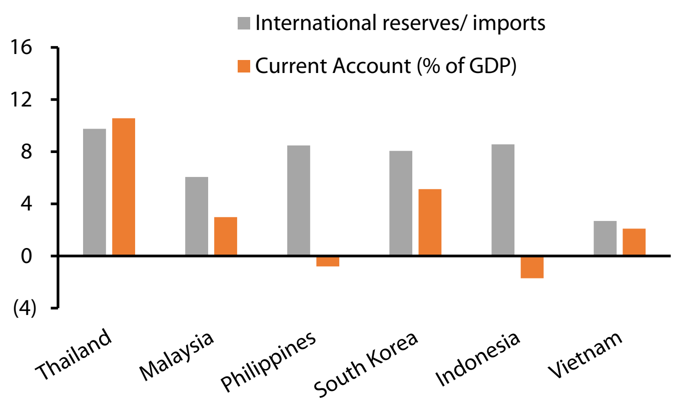
The awareness of the government, through its various programs to manage the medium-term debt is a positive. One of those programs is to keep loans at acceptable levels attempt to balance the State budget. It is also meant to keep the allocation and use of loans in line with their original purposes, debt indexes at safe levels, and ensure debt repayment capacity. In recent years, the growth rate of public debt has gone down.

**Figure 7: External debt and budget deficit**




*Source: WB, ADB, Rong Viet Securities*

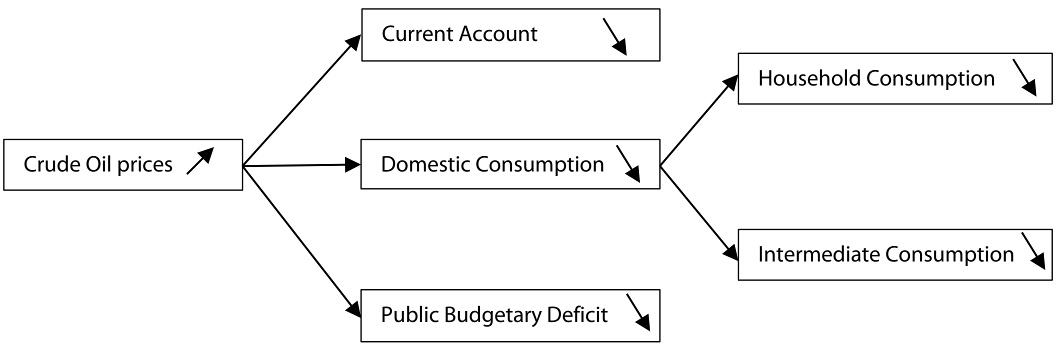
**Figure 8: International reserves and current account**




*Source: ADB, Rong Viet Securities*

It is important to keep an eye on household consumption and inflation, especially cost-push inflation under the pressure of oil prices.

**Figure 9: Crude oil prices' effects on the economy**



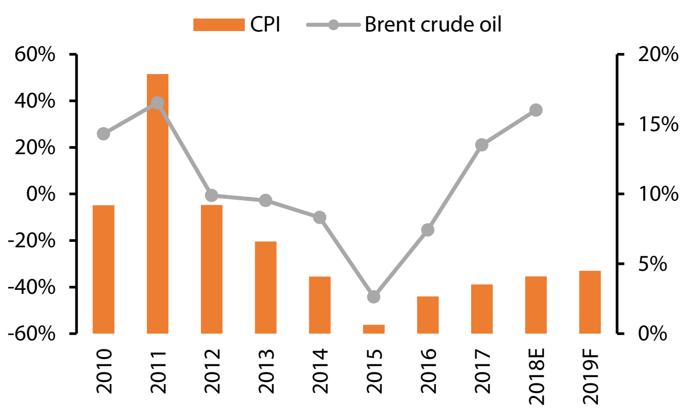

*Source: Rong Viet Securities*

Higher oil prices will create cost-push inflation and narrow real household incomes. Housing accounts for 16% of the CPI basket. Currently, the Government is using the petrol price stabilization fund to intervene in the domestic gasoline market in order to control prices. These import prices are up 20-30% ytd. We estimate that this has contributed to have added 0.9%-1.3% to Vietnam's CPI in 2018.

Meanwhile, we are more concerned about a worse current account. While large-scale oil refineries started operating in recent years, Vietnam will become a net energy importer in the next few years due to the decrease in domestic oil output. In 9M2018, the import of crude oil rose by 282% YoY.

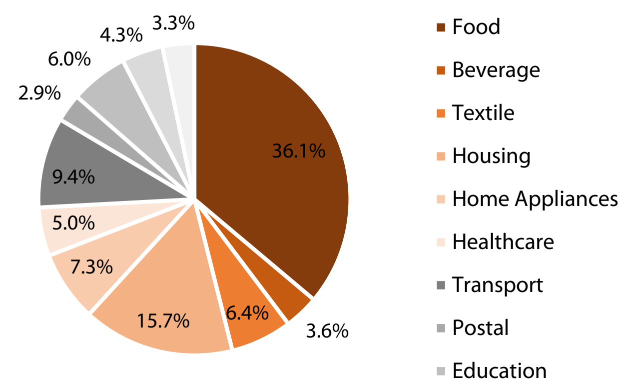
In general, we think that the government's effort to mitigate inflation's negative effects on domestic consumption, which is currently the pillar of the economy. In 2019, the environmental protection tax on petroleum prices also takes effect.

**Figure 10: CPI vs Transport index (%, YoY)**



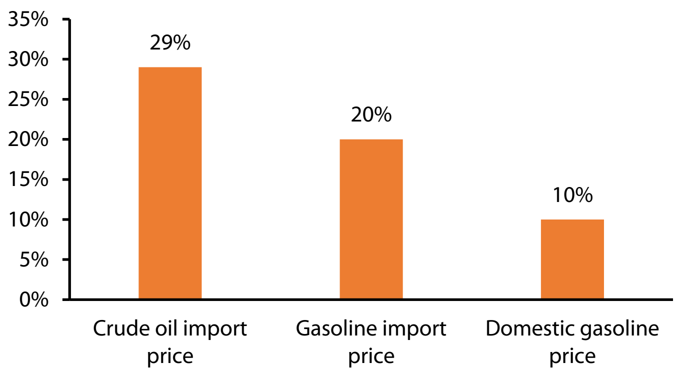

*Source: ADB, GSO, Rong Viet Securities*

**Figure 11: CPI structure**



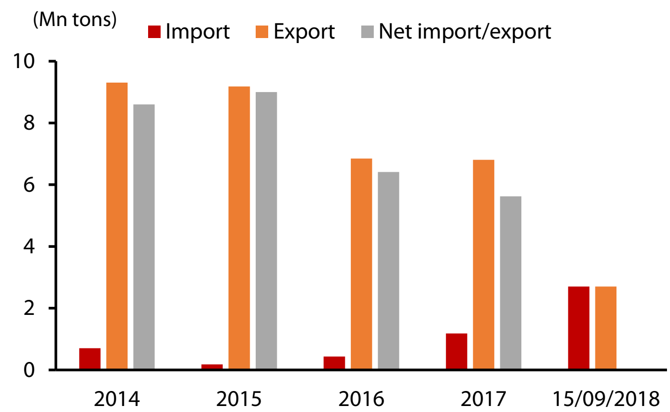

*Source: ADB, Rong Viet Securities*

**Figure 12: Energy price growth (%, YTD)**




*Source: Customs, Rong Viet Securities*

**Figure 13: Import/Export crude oil of Vietnam**



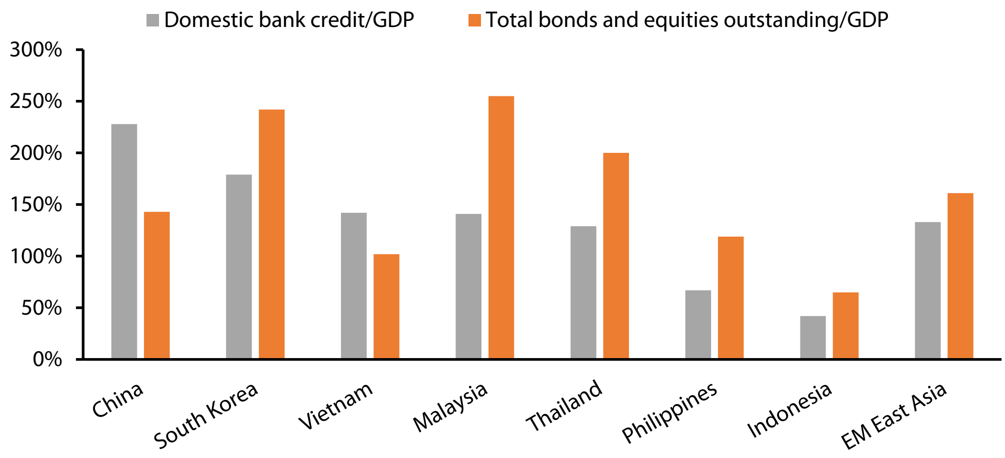

*Source: ADB, Rong Viet Securities*

Last but not least, Vietnam and China are rare countries where total bonds and equities outstanding accounts for a lower part of GDP than domestic bank credit (See charts below). On one hand, there are rooms to expand the scale of the capital market. On the other hand, there are more pressure on lawmakers who are urgent to raise up foreign participation ratio and develop the domestic capital market.

The role of foreign inflows is essential to Vietnam's financial deepening initiatives. Foreign investors bought a major part of the state large-scale divestment, such as Vinamilk and Sabeco. Vietnam's portfolio flows on the financial account has remained positive in the recent quarters. In next two years, the government is committed to continue the divestment program.

Currently, the strict laws on money inflows/outflows are Vietnam's barriers against external risks.

**Figure 14: Domestic bank credit vs total bonds and equities outstanding**




*Source: UBS, Rong Viet Securities*

## ANALYSIS & INVESTMENT ADVISORY DEPARTMENT


**Bernard Lapointe**
*Head of Research*
bernard.lapointe@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 62992006 (1525)

**Lam Nguyen**
*Senior Strategist*
lam.ntp@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1313)
- Banking
- Market Strategy

**Hieu Nguyen**
*Senior Analyst*
hieu.nd@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1514)
- Market Strategy
- Pharmaceuticals
- Aviation

**Duong Lai**
*Senior Analyst*
duong.ld@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1522)
- Real Estate
- Building Materials

**Vu Tran**
*Senior Analyst*
vu.thx@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1518)
- Oil & Gas
- Fertilizer

**Son Phan**
*Analyst*
son.pnt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1519)
- Utilities
- Natural Rubber

**Tu Vu**
*Analyst*
tu.va@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1511)
- Macroeconomics

**Son Tran**
*Analyst*
son.tt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1527)
- Market Strategy
- Retails
- Technology

**Tung Do**
*Analyst*
tung.dt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1521)
- Logistics
- Aviation

**Thu Pham**
*Analyst*
thu.pa@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1520)
- Industrial Real Estate
- Infrastructure & BOT

**Thao Dang**
*Analyst*
thao.dtp@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1529)
- Food & Beverage
- Textiles

**Tam Pham**
*Analyst*
tam.ptt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1530)
- Insurance
- Fishery

**Anh Nguyen**
*Analyst*
anh2.ntt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1531)
- Banking

**Vy Nguyen**
*Analyst*
vy.ntk@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1528)
- Automobile & Parts

**Trinh Le**
*Analyst*
trinh.lx@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1536)
- Industrials
- Agricultural Medicine

**Thinh Bui**
*Analyst*
thinh.bnh@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1315)
- Market Strategy
- Steel

**Anh Tran**
*Analyst*
anh.tm@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1293)
- Building Materials
- Construction

**Hoang Nguyen**
*Analyst*
hoang.nt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1538)
- Macroeconomics

**Ha Tran**
*Assistant*
ha.ttn@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1526)

**Vi Truong**
*Assistant*
vi.ttt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1517)



## RONG VIET SECURITIES CORPORATION

Floor 1-2-3-4, Viet Dragon Tower,

141 Nguyen Du St. - Dist 1 – HCMC

Tel: (84 28) 6299 2006

Fax: (84 28) 6291 7986

Email: info@vdsc.com.vn

Website: www.vdsc.com.vn

**Hanoi Branch**

10th floor, Eurowindown Building, 2 Ton That Tung, Trung Tu Ward, Dong Da Dist, Hanoi

Tel: (84 24) 6288 2006

Fax: (84 24) 6288 2008

**Can Tho Branch**

95-97-99 Vo Van Tan – Ninh Kieu - Can Tho

Tel: (84 292) 381 7578

Fax: (84 292) 381 8387

**Nha Trang Branch**

50Bis Yersin St, Nha Trang

Tel: (84 258) 382 0006

Fax: (84 258) 382 0008

## DISCLAIMERS

This report is prepared in order to provide information and analysis to clients of Rong Viet Securities only. It is and should not be construed as an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to purchase any securities. No consideration has been given to the investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any specific. The readers should be aware that Rong Viet Securities may have a conflict of interest that can compromise the objectivity this research. This research is to be viewed by investors only as a source of reference when making investments. Investors are to take full responsibility of their own decisions. VDSC shall not be liable for any loss, damages, cost or expense incurring or arising from the use or reliance, either full or partial, of the information in this publication.
The opinions expressed in this research report reflect only the analyst's personal views of the subject securities or matters; and no part of the research analyst's compensation was, is, or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendations or opinions expressed in the report.
The information herein is compiled by or arrived at Rong Viet Securities from sources believed to be reliable. We, however, do not guarantee its accuracy or completeness. Opinions, estimations and projections expressed in this report are deemed valid up to the date of publication of this report and can be subject to change without notice.


**IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES FOR U.S. PERSONS**

This research report was prepared by Viet Dragon Securities Corp. ("VDSC"), a company authorized to engage in securities activities in Vietnam. VDSC is not a registered broker-dealer in the United States and, therefore, is not subject to U.S. rules regarding the preparation of research reports and the independence of research analysts. This research report is provided for distribution to "major U.S. institutional investors" in reliance on the exemption from registration provided by Rule 15a-6 of the U.S. Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act").

**Additional Disclosures**

This research report is for distribution only under such circumstances as may be permitted by applicable law. This research report has no regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any specific recipient, even if sent only to a single recipient. This research report is not guaranteed to be a complete statement or summary of any securities, markets, reports or developments referred to in this research report. Neither VDSC nor any of its directors, officers, employees or agents shall have any liability, however arising, for any error, inaccuracy or incompleteness of fact or opinion in this research report or lack of care in this research report's preparation or publication, or any losses or damages which may arise from the use of this research report.

VDSC may rely on information barriers, such as "Chinese Walls" to control the flow of information within the areas, units, divisions, groups, or affiliates of VDSC.

Investing in any non-U.S. securities or related financial instruments (including ADRs) discussed in this research report may present certain risks. The securities of non-U.S. issuers may not be registered with, or be subject to the regulations of, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Information on such non-U.S. securities or related financial instruments may be limited. Foreign companies may not be subject to audit and reporting standards and regulatory requirements comparable to those in effect within the United States.

The value of any investment or income from any securities or related financial instruments discussed in this research report denominated in a currency other than U.S. dollars is subject to exchange rate fluctuations that may have a positive or adverse effect on the value of or income from such securities or related financial instruments.

Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance and no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made by VDSC with respect to future performance. Income from investments may fluctuate. The price or value of the investments to which this research report relates, either directly or indirectly, may fall or rise against the interest of investors. Any recommendation or opinion contained in this research report may become outdated as a consequence of changes in the environment in which the issuer of the securities under analysis operates, in addition to changes in the estimates and forecasts, assumptions and valuation methodology used herein.

No part of the content of this research report may be copied, forwarded or duplicated in any form or by any means without the prior.

**RESEARCH DISCLOSURES**

**Third Party Research**
This is third party research. It was prepared by RongViet Securities Corporation (RongViet), with headquarters in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. RongViet is authorized to engage in securities activities according to its domestic legislation. This research is not a product of Exotix USA, Inc, a U.S. registered broker-dealer. RongViet has sole control over the contents of this research report. Exotix USA, Inc does not exercise any control over the contents of, or the views expressed in, research reports prepared by RongViet.

RongViet is not registered as a broker-dealer in the United States and, therefore, is not subject to U.S. rules regarding the preparation of research reports and the independence of research analysts. This research report is provided for distribution to "major U.S. institutional investors" and other "U.S. institutional investors" in reliance on the exemption from registration provided by Rule 15a-6 of the U.S. Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act").

Any U.S. recipient of this research report wishing to effect any transaction to buy or sell securities or related financial instruments based on the information provided in this research report should do so only through Exotix USA, Inc, located at Floor 36, 444 Madison Avenue, Floor 36, New York, NY 10022. A representative of Exotix USA, Inc. is contactable on +1 (212) 551 3480. Under no circumstances should any U.S. recipient of this research report effect any transaction to buy or sell securities or related financial instruments through RongViet. Exotix USA, Inc accepts responsibility for the contents of this research report, subject to the terms set out below, to the extent that it is delivered to a U.S. person other than a major U.S. institutional investor.

None of the materials provided in this report may be used, reproduced, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including recording or the use of any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from.

RongViet is the employer of the research analyst(s) responsible for the content of this report and research analysts preparing this report are resident outside the U.S. and are not associated persons of any U.S. regulated broker-dealer. The analyst whose name appears in this research report is not registered or qualified as a research analyst with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA") and may not be an associated person of Exotix USA, Inc and, therefore, may not be subject to applicable restrictions under FINRA Rules on communications with a subject company, public appearances and trading securities held by a research analyst account.

Exotix USA, Inc. or its affiliates has not managed or co-managed a public offering of securities for the subject company in the past 12 months, has not received compensation for investment banking services from the subject company in the past 12 months, and does not expect to receive or intend to seek compensation for investment banking services from the subject company in the next three months. Exotix USA, Inc. has never owned any class of equity securities of the subject company. There are no other actual, or potential, material conflicts of interest of Exotix USA, Inc. at the time of the publication of this report. As of the publication of this report, Exotix USA, Inc. does not make a market in the subject securities.

**About Exotix Capital**

Exotix Capital is a registered trade mark of Exotix Partners LLP. Exotix Partners LLP and its subsidiaries ("Exotix Capital") provide specialist investment banking services to trading professionals in the wholesale markets. Exotix Capital draws together liquidity and matches buyers and sellers so that deals can be executed by its customers. Exotix Capital may at any time, hold a trading position in the securities and financial instruments discussed in this report. Exotix Capital has procedures in place to identify and manage any potential conflicts of interests that arise in connection with its research. A copy of Exotix Capital's conflict of interest policy is available at www.exotix.com/regulatory-information.

**Distribution**

This report is not intended for distribution to the public and may not be reproduced, redistributed or published, in whole or in part, for any purpose without the written permission of Exotix Capital. Exotix Capital shall accept no liability whatsoever for the actions of third parties in this respect. This report is for distribution only under such circumstances as may be permitted by applicable law.

This report may not be used to create any financial instruments or products or any indices. Neither Exotix Capital, nor its members, directors, representatives, or employees accept any liability for any direct or consequential loss or damage arising out of the use of all or any part of the information herein.

**United Kingdom:** Distributed by Exotix Partners LLP only to Eligible Counterparties or Professional Clients (as defined in the FCA Handbook). The information herein does not apply to, and should not be relied upon by, Retail Clients (as defined in the FCA Handbook); neither the FCA's protection rules nor compensation scheme may be applied.

**UAE:** Distributed in the Dubai International Financial Centre by Exotix Partners LLP (Dubai) which is regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority ("DFSA"). Material is intended only for persons who meet the criteria for Professional Clients under the Rules of the DFSA and no other person should act upon it.

**Other distribution:** The distribution of this report in other jurisdictions may be restricted by law and persons into whose possession this document comes should inform themselves about, and observe, any such restriction.

**Disclaimers**

Exotix Capital and/or its members, directors or employees may have interests, or long or short positions, and may at any time make purchases or sales as a principal or agent of the securities referred to herein. Exotix Capital may rely on information barriers, such as "Chinese Walls" to control the flow of information within the areas, units, divisions, groups of Exotix Capital.

Investing in any non-U.S. securities or related financial instruments (including ADRs) discussed in this report may present certain risks. The securities of non-U.S. issuers may not be registered with, or be subject to the regulations of, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Information on such non-U.S. securities or related financial instruments may be limited. Foreign companies may not be subject to audit and reporting standards and regulatory requirements comparable to those in effect within the United States. The value of any investment or income from any securities or related financial instruments discussed in this report denominated in a currency other than U.S. dollars is subject to exchange rate fluctuations that may have a positive or adverse effect on the value of or income from such securities or related financial instruments.

Frontier and Emerging Market laws and regulations governing investments in securities markets may not be sufficiently developed or may be subject to inconsistent or arbitrary interpretation or application. Frontier and Emerging Market securities are often not issued in physical form and registration of ownership may not be subject to a centralised system. Registration of ownership of certain types of securities may not be subject to standardised procedures and may even be effected on an ad hoc basis. The value of investments in Frontier and Emerging Market securities may also be affected by fluctuations in available currency rates and exchange control regulations. Not all of these or other risks associated with the relevant company, market or instrument which are the subject matter of the report are necessarily considered.