

Ministry of Finance of Georgia

Current Economic Outlook April, 2020



Brief Summary

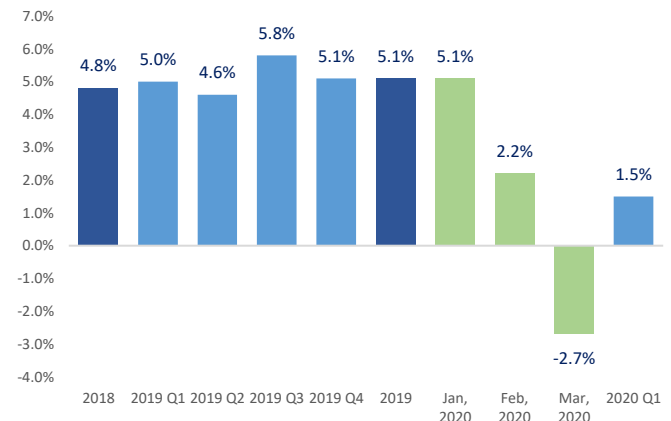
- Based on Geostat's preliminary data, annual real economic growth in March equals to -2.7%, while average annual real GDP growth for first quarter of 2020 equaled 1.5 percent
- Annual inflation equals to 6.9%, while core inflation - 4.6%
- Export annually decreased by 22.1 %
- Import annually decreased by 13.4 %
- Income from tourism annually decreased by 69.8 %
- Fitch Ratings has reduced Georgia's sovereign rating from "BB Stable" to "BB Negative"



Economic Growth

In March 2020, annual economic growth was -2.7 percent, while the average real growth in the first quarter of 2020 was 1.5 percent. This sharp decline is due to declining economic activity, both within the country and in the region due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020 the estimated real growth compared to the same period of the previous year was posted in the following activities: Construction, Information and communication. A decrease was registered in Accommodation and food service activities, Transportation and storage, Arts, entertainment and recreation, Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, Financial and insurance activities, Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, Manufacturing, Real estate activities.

Figure 1: Economic Growth



Source: Geostat

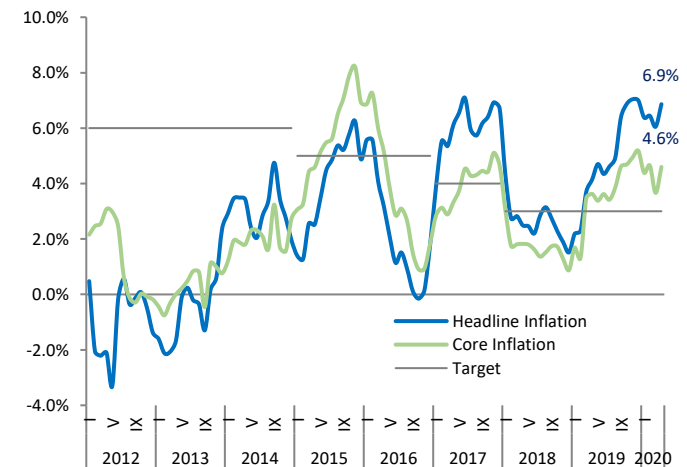
Price Level

As of April 2020, the inflation rate was 6.9 percent compared to the same period last year, which is higher than the target inflation. Core inflation was 4.6 percent in the corresponding period. The effect of the excise rate change will also be reflected in 2020 inflation. The effect of the tobacco price change on inflation in March 2020 is 0.4 points.

The main influence on the formation of annual inflation was the dynamics of prices for food and non-alcoholic beverages (+16.1%), Furnishings, household equipment and maintenance (+8.9%). And the annual decline was observed in the categories of leisure and entertainment (-4.3%), clothing and footwear (-2.2%).

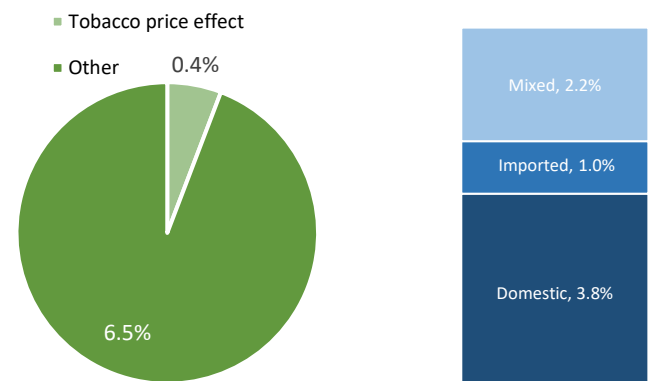
At the same time, in April 2020, inflation was 0.9 percent compared to the previous month, which was significantly caused by rising prices for Furnishings, household equipment and maintenance (+4.9%) and lower prices for Restaurants and hotels (-4.9%).

Figure 2: Annual Inflation, 2020 April



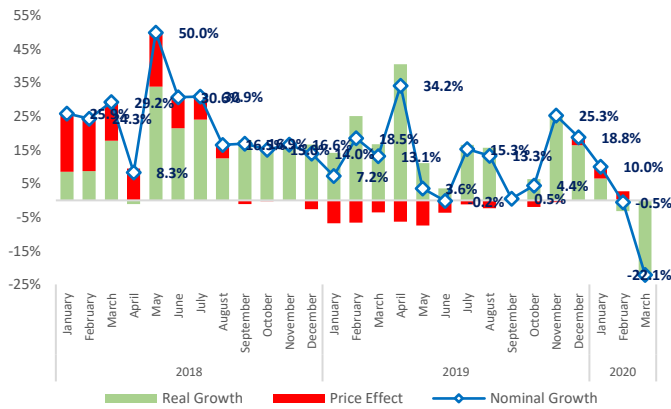
Source: NBG

Figure 3: Inflation Decomposition, 2020 April



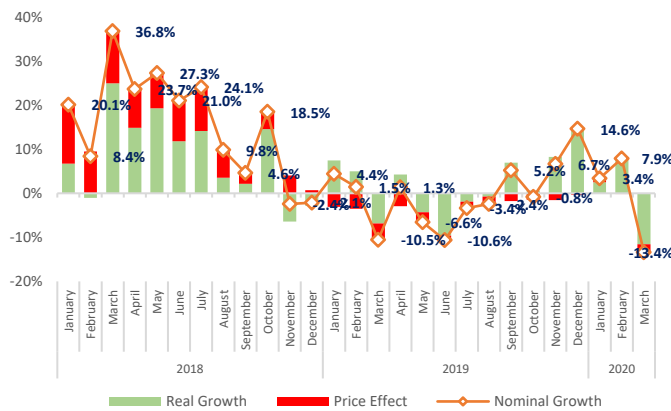
Source: Geostat

Figure 4: Annual Change of Export



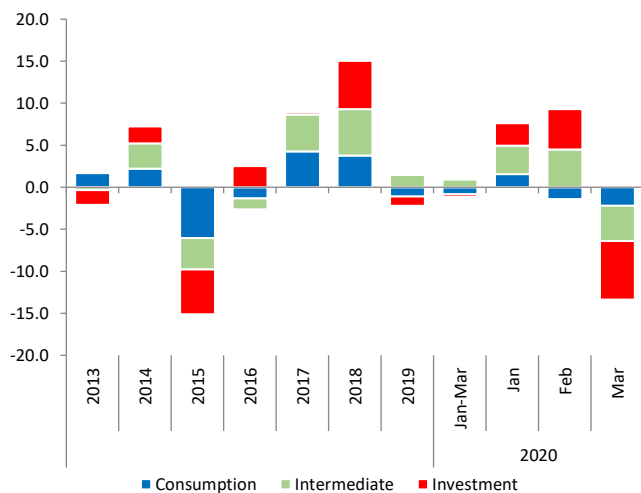
Source: Geostat

Figure 5: Annual Change of Import



Source: Geostat

Figure 6: Decomposition of Change of Import



Source: Geostat

External Trade

In March 2020, export annually decreased by 22 percent and reached value of 251.9 mln USD, while import decreased by 13.4 percent reaching 654 mln USD. These changes caused decrease of the trade deficit by 6.8 percent compared to previous year and was equal to 403.1 mln USD. This significant reduction is due to the decline of domestic and external demand and decrease of economic activity in the world and the region as a result of the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic.

It is important to separate real and nominal effects in the changes of export and import. In March 2020 real growth of export was equal to -21.8 percent, and real growth of import was -11.6 percent.

In March 2020, import of investment goods, import of intermediate and consumption goods decreased by 7, 4.2 and 2.2 percent respectively.

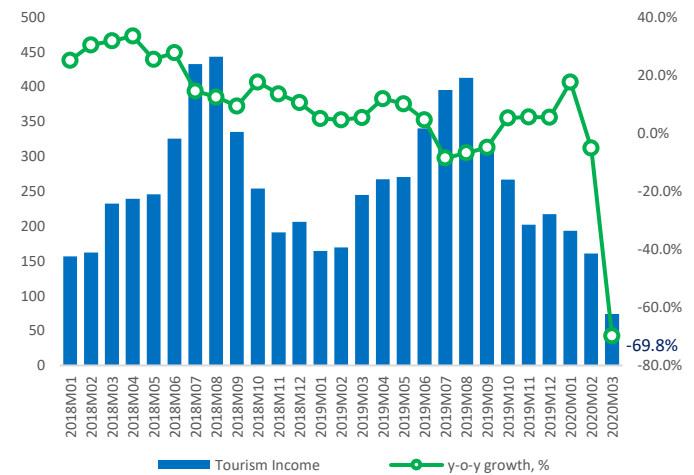
In March 2020, the first place in the top ten export goods from the commodity groups was occupied by copper ores and concentrates with 69.8 million. USD (27.7 percent of total exports), second place - light vehicles - 28.3 million US dollars (11.3 percent of total exports), and third - ferroalloys 15.8 million U.S. dollars (6.3 percent of total exports). The largest import commodity group in March 2020 was the group of cars, whose imports amounted to 45.4 million. USD and accounted for 6.9 percent of total imports. Also significant were oil and oil products with 44.6 million (6.8 percent of imports) and copper ores and concentrates with 35.7 million U.S. dollars (5.4 percent of imports).

In March 2020, the largest export partners are China (34.9 million US dollars, 13.9% of total exports), Bulgaria (32.5 million US dollars, 12.9%) and Azerbaijan (31.6 million US dollars, 12.5%). The largest importing partner countries are Turkey (133.1 million USD, 20.3% of total imports), Russia (77.1 million USD, 11.8%) and China (49.2 million USD, 7.5%).

Tourism

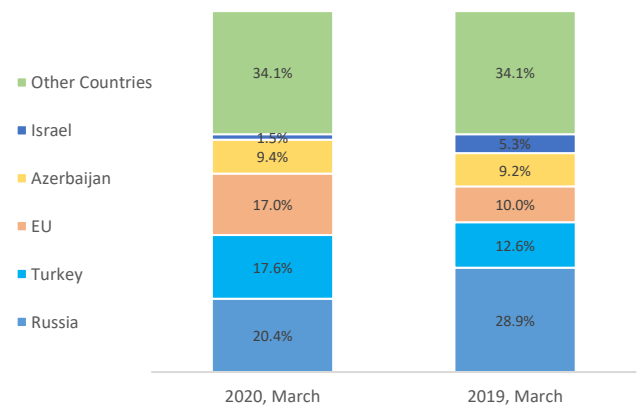
In March 2020, the total number of visitors was 196 thousand, which is 67.3 percent less than in March last year. Revenue from tourism fell 69.8 percent to \$ 73.8 million. This sharp decrease is due to the closure of the borders caused by the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic and the decline of international travel on the territory of Georgia in the second half of March. In 2019, revenue from tourism increased by 1.4 percent. The small increase in the ratio is due to the ban on flights from Russia to Georgia in July. However, at the same time, increased revenue from other countries has managed to mitigate the impact of this negative shock. At the same time, the number of visitors in 2019 increased by 8.4 percent annually.

Figure 7: Income from Tourism, mln USD



Source: NBG

Figure 8: Top Countries, Tourism

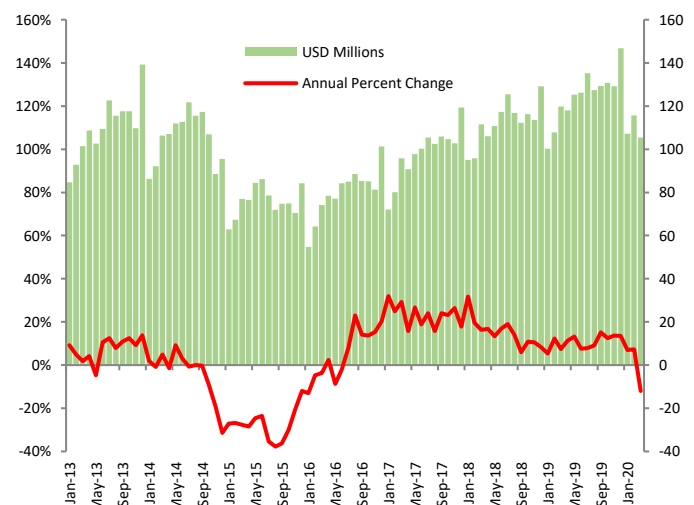


Source: NBG

Remittances

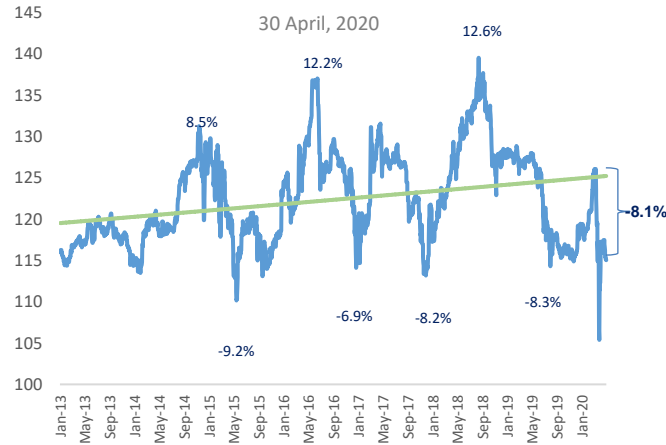
In March 2020, net remittances totaled \$ 105.5 million, which is 12 lower compared to previous year. This decrease reflects effect of falling oil prices and sharp depreciation of RUB along with tightened social distancing measures in Italy and Israel. Remittances fell by 39.7 percent from Russia (-9.7 percent contribution to total growth), 10.3 percent from Israel (-1.1 percent contribution to total growth), 8.4 percent from Italy (-1.3 percent contribution to total growth), and 4.7 percent from Turkey (-0.2 percent contribution to total growth). At the same time, growth was recorded at 28.2 percent from Germany (0.8 percent contribution to total growth), 52.2 percent from Ukraine (0.4 percent contribution to total growth), and 1.9 percent from Greece (0.2 percent contribution to overall growth).

Figure 9: Net Remittances



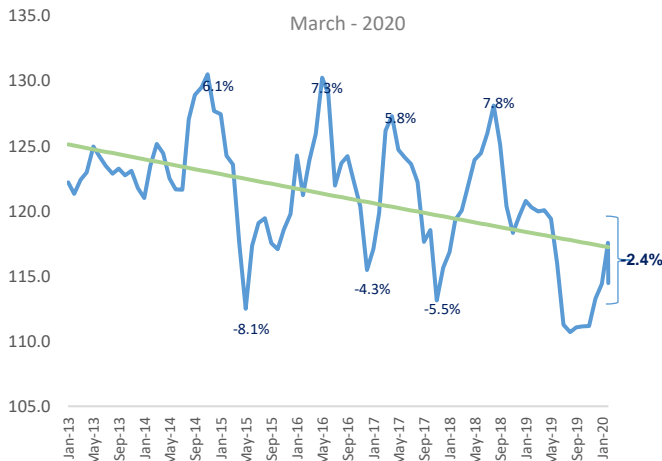
Source: NBG

Figure 10: Nominal Effective Exchange Rate



Source: NBG

Figure 11: Real Effective Exchange Rate



Source: NBG

Exchange Rate

As of April 30, the nominal effective exchange rate of the lari has depreciated by 10 percent relative to January 1, 2019 and depreciated by 2.6 percent relative to January 1, 2018,. This time, the real effective exchange rate for March is depreciated by 4.3 percent than in January of the previous year and appreciated by 1 percent relative to January 2018.

As of the end of April, the nominal effective exchange rate of the lari has depreciated by 8.1 percent relative to the medium-term trend, while the real effective exchange rate of March has depreciated by 2.4 percent compared to the medium-term trend.

The depreciation during March is due to the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic and the fall in international oil prices, which has affected the economic activity of trading partners, revenue from tourism and remittances. At the same time, the depreciation of the exchange rate was also affected by the negative expectations and existing uncertainty regarding above events.

Table 1: Change of Nominal Effective and Real Effective Exchange rates

	April 30, 2020		Apr 30, 2020 - Jan 1, 2019	Apr 30, 2020 - Jan 1, 2018
Euro	3.4748	▼	-19.6%	▼ -24.8%
US Dollar	3.2032	▼	-17.4%	▼ -25.2%
Turkish Lira	0.4586	▲	63.6%	▲ 78.6%
Russian Ruble	0.0435	▼	-1.1%	▼ -25.2%
NEER	115.03	▼	-10.0%	▼ -2.6%
REER (March 2020)	114.46	▼	-4.3%	▼ -1.0%

Source: NBG

Budget Revenue Performance

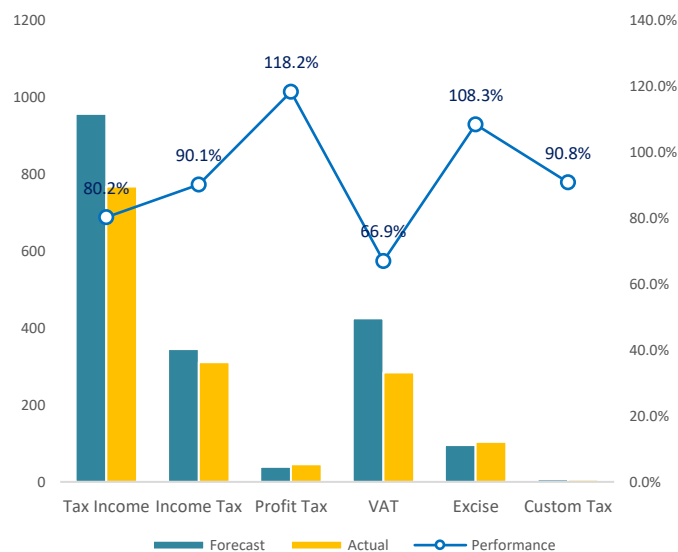
The forecast of tax income for January-April 2020 is 3,757.2 million GEL, while the actual figure for January-April 2020 is 0.2 percent higher than planned, reaching value of 3,005.8 million GEL.

The actual level of tax income in April was 767 mln GEL, which is 24.7 percent lower compared to the forecasted value of tax income in April (956.1 mln GEL).

- Revenue from Income tax amounted 310.7 mln GEL, which is 90.1 percent of forecasted value (345 mln GEL).
- Revenue from Profit tax was equal to 46.1 mln GEL, which is 118.1 percent of projected value (39 mln GEL).
- Revenue from VAT was equal to 284.5 mln GEL, which is 66.9 percent of the forecasted value of 425 mln GEL.
- Revenue from Excise tax amounted 103.5 mln GEL, which is 108.3 percent of the projected value of 96.5 mln GEL.
- Revenue from Custom tax was equal to 5.9 mln GEL, which is 90.6 percent of the forecasted value (6.5 mln GEL).
- Revenue from Property tax was equal to 26.3 mln GEL, which is 79.6 percent of forecasted value was of 33 mln GEL.

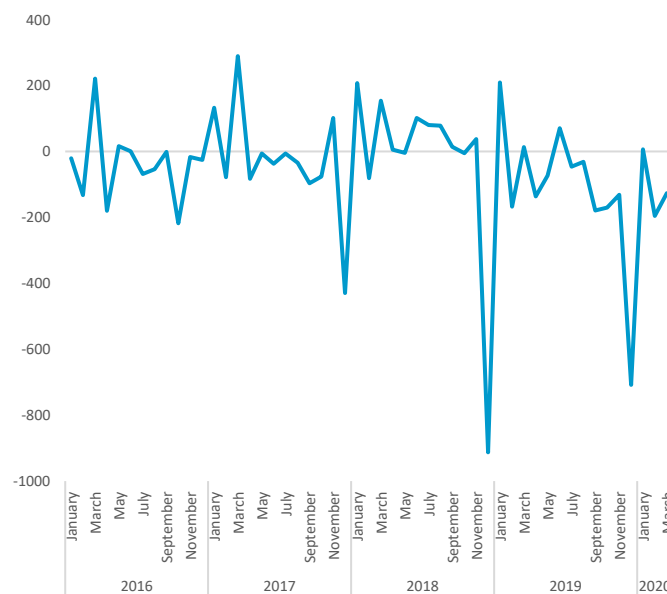
In April 2020, compared to the same period last year, consolidated budget revenues increased by 20.8% and expenditures increased by 30.5%. At the same time, the operating budget of the consolidated budget, which is the government's savings, amounted to 139.1 million GEL, while the total balance was set at -127 million GEL.

Figure 12: Budget Revenue Performance



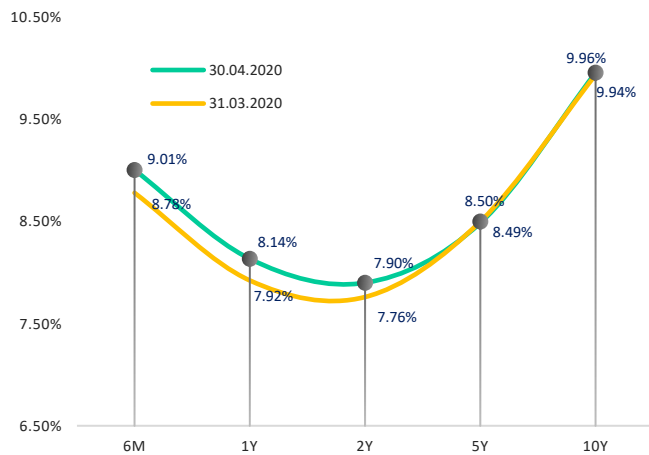
Source: MOF

Figure 13: Budget Deficit



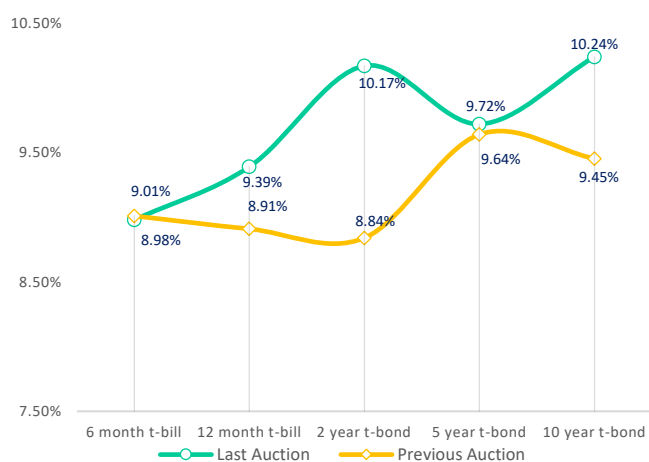
Source: MOF

Figure 14: Portfolio Yield Curve



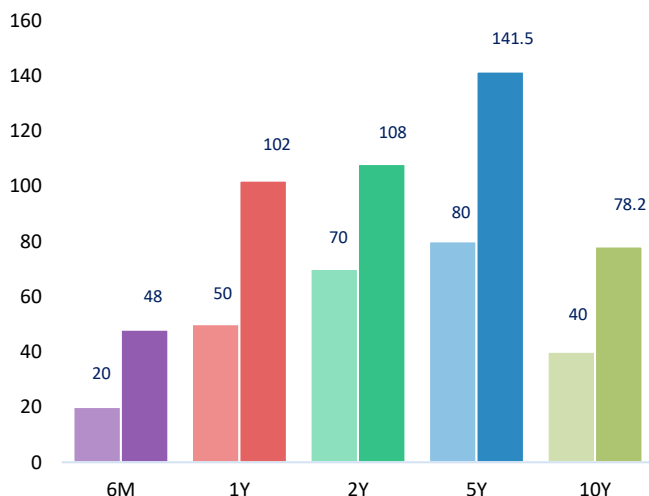
Source: MOF

Figure 15: Weighted average interest rates



Source: MOF

Figure 16: Issuance and Demand, mln GEL



Source: MOF

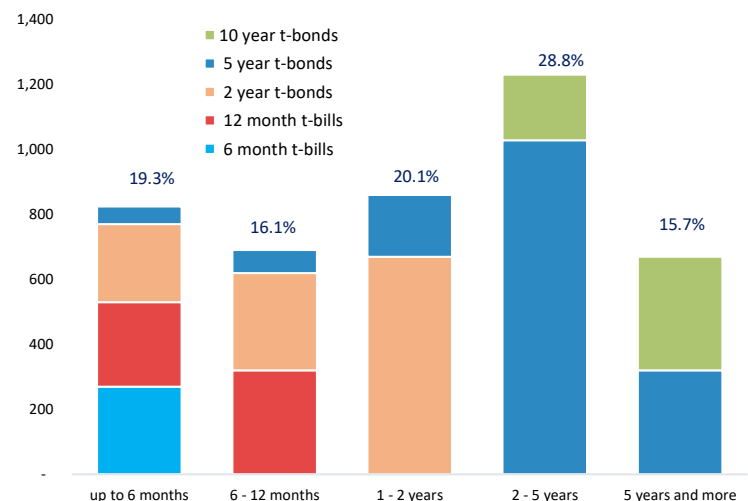
Treasury Securities Portfolio

In April 2020, 5 auctions were held with total issuance volume of 260 million GEL. The weighted average interest rate amounted to 9.801%. There were issued treasury bills with maturities of 6 months and 12 months; Treasury bonds with maturities of 2 years 5 years and 10 years. Treasury securities with total amount of 150 million GEL were redeemed.

The portfolio yield curve changed significantly for maturities of 6 months, 12 months and 2 years, compared to other maturities.

As of April 30, 2020, 35.3% of treasury securities portfolio is composed of securities whose maturity date is due for the next 1 year. Bid-to-cover ratio decreased compared to the previous month's value (March 1.95) and is 1.84.

Figure 17: Portfolio Forming Securities Composed by Time to Maturity



Source: MOF

Private Sector Larization

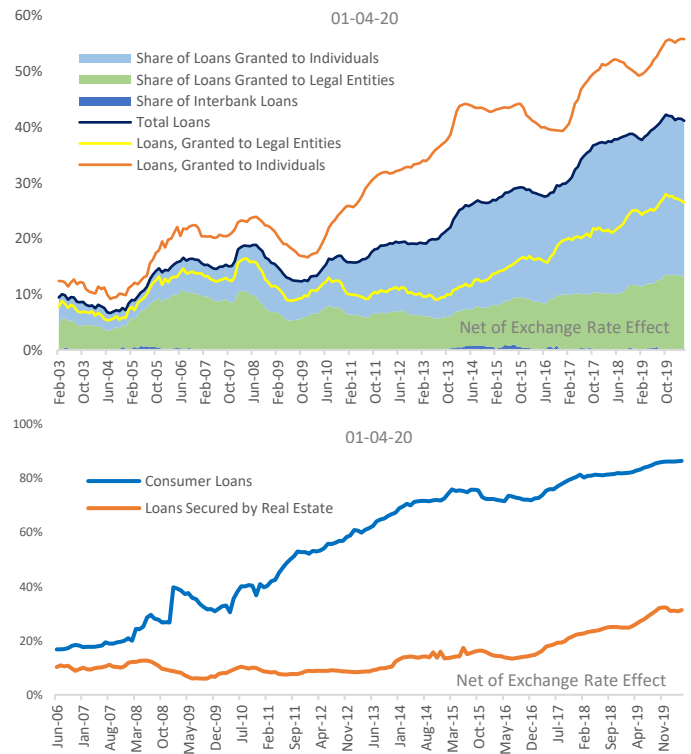
Loan larization is on the rise. The larization of total loans is largely due to the larization of loans issued to individuals. By 1 of April 2020, the larization of loans to individuals was 55.8 percent, the larization of loans to legal entities was 26.5 percent, and the total larization of loans was 41.2 percent.

As for the larization of loans according to collateral, there is a growing trend of both mortgage and consumer loans, but the larization of consumer loans significantly exceeds the larization of real estate loans. By 1 of April 2020, the larization of consumer loans was 86.4 percent, while the larization of mortgage loans was 31.3 percent.

The larization of deposits is significantly conditioned by the larization of deposits of legal entities. As of 1 of April 2020, the total larization of total deposits was 33.2 percent, the larization of deposits of legal entities in the same period was 45.5 percent, and the larization of deposits of individuals - 23 percent.

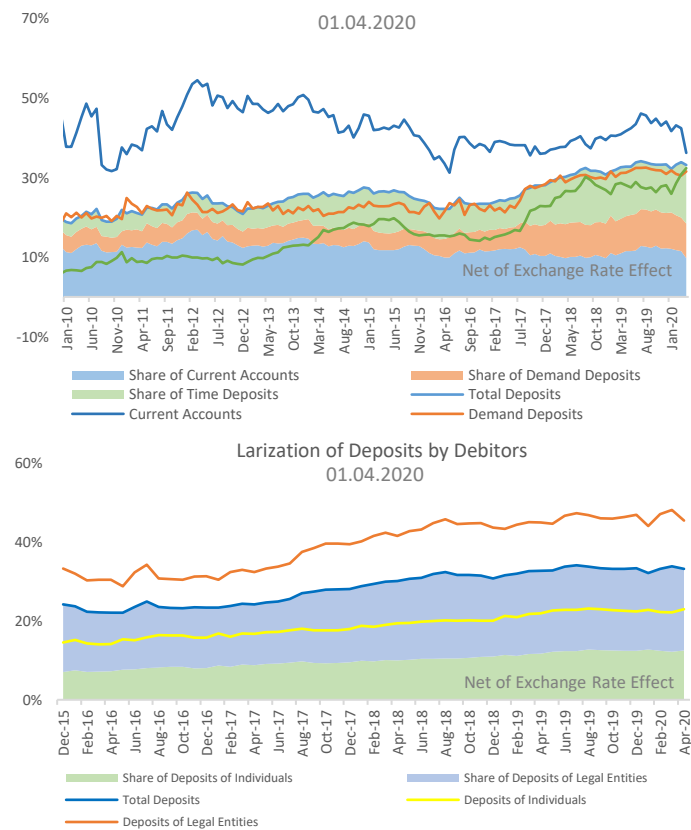
The larization of current accounts for April 2020 was 36.2 percent. At the same time, the larization of deposits before demand is 31.6 percent, and the larization of time deposits – 32.4 percent.

Figure 18: Loan Larization



Source: NBG

Figure 19: Deposit Larization



Source: NBG

Figure 20: Annual Growth of Loans

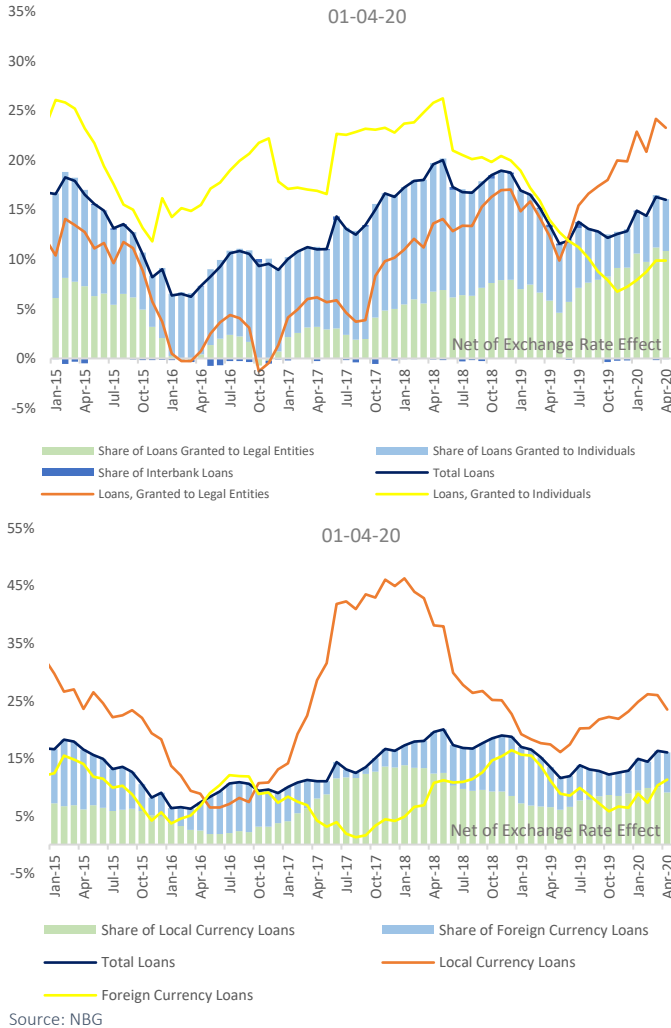
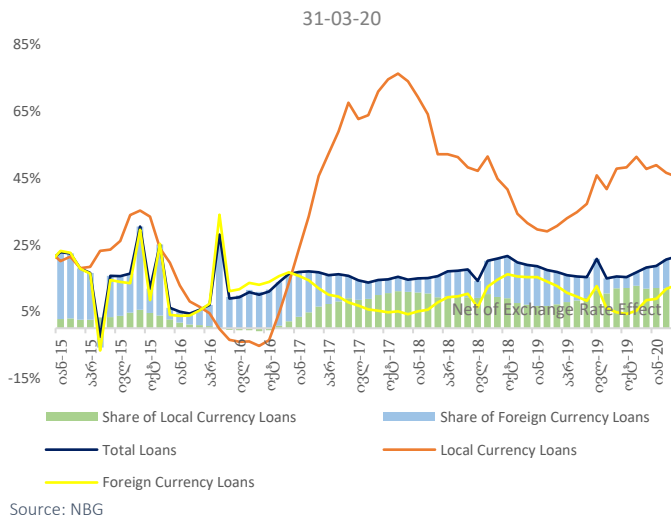


Figure 21: Annual Growth of Loans secured by Real Estate



Review of Loans

The annual growth of the credit portfolio as of 1 of April 2020 compared to 2019 was 16 percent. The annual growth of loans to legal entities decreased by 0.9 percentage points compared to the previous month and amounted to 23.2 percent during the same period, while the annual growth of loans to individuals amounted to 9.8 percent.

As of 1 of April 2020, the growth of loans in national currency amounted to 23.5 percent compared to the same period last year, the annual growth of loans in foreign currency increased by 1 percentage points compared to the previous month and amounted to 11.3 percent during the same period.

By April 2020, mortgage loans had increased by 0.9 percentage points compared to the previous month and amounted to 21.4 percent. And the annual growth of consumer loans was 12.6 percent.

Review of Deposits

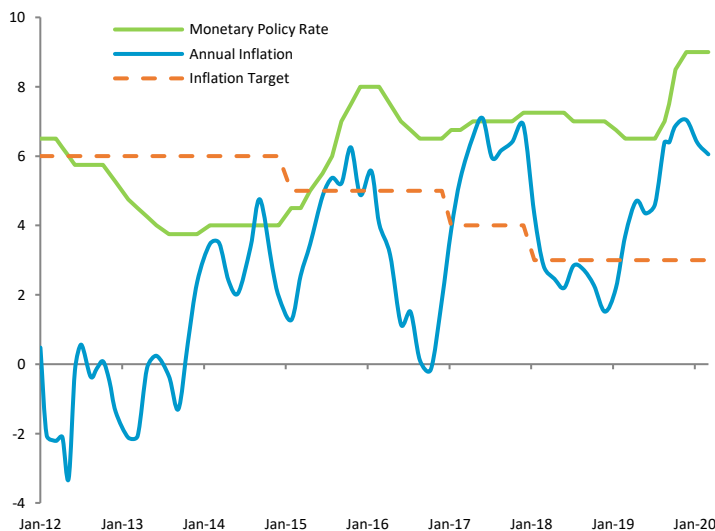
The growth of total deposits in April 2020 compared to the corresponding period of 2019 was 9 percent, the annual growth of deposits denominated in the national currency increased by 7 percentage points compared to the previous period and amounted to 10 percent, and the annual growth of deposits denominated in foreign currency - 8 percent.

In April 2020, the annual increase in deposits of individuals was 12 percent, while the annual increase in deposits of legal entities was 6 percent.

Monetary Policy Rate

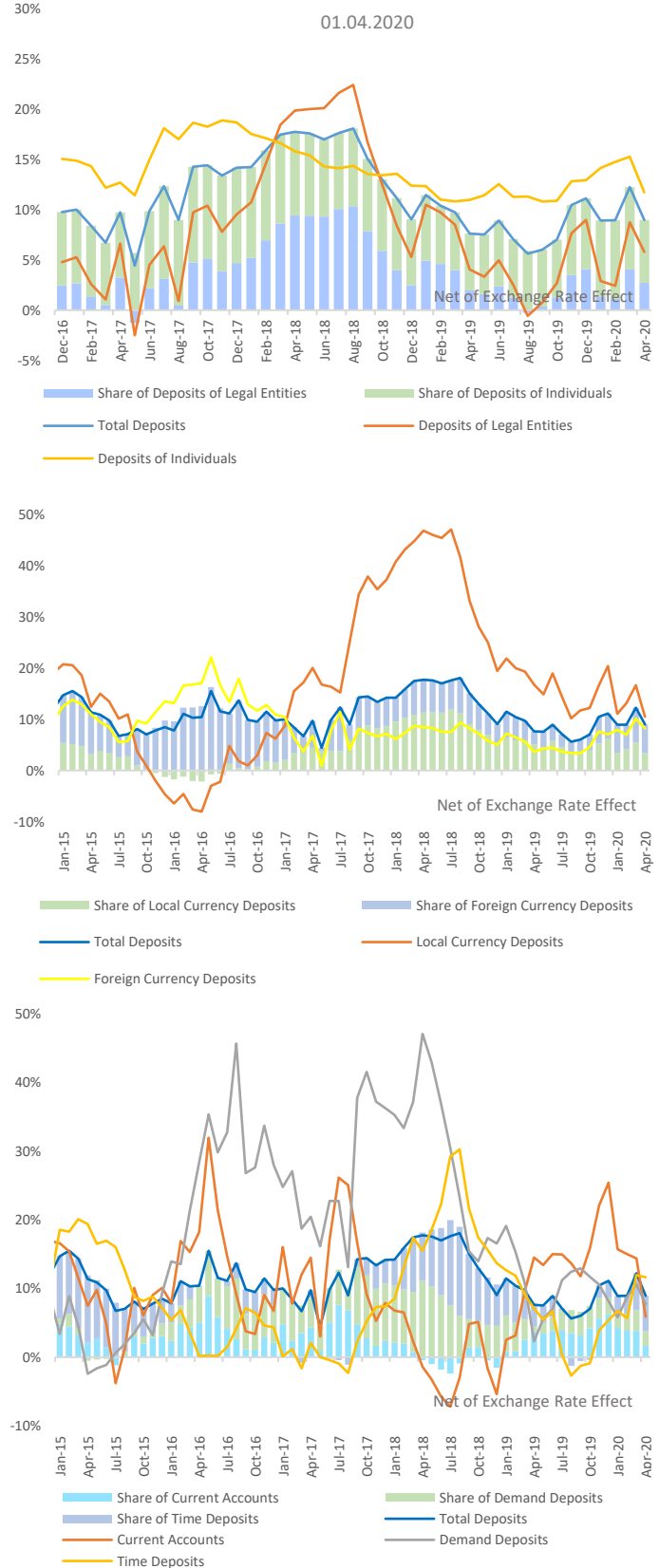
On March 18, 2020, the Monetary Policy Committee of the National Bank of Georgia decided to leave the refinancing rate unchanged at 9.0 percent. This tightened monetary policy was aimed at neutralizing inflationary pressures following the depreciation of the exchange rate. On April 29, 2020, the committee decided to reduce the refinancing rate to 8.5 percent. According to the NBG's forecast, due to temporary factors, inflation will remain high for several months, then gradually decline, and in the first half of 2021 approach the target level. According to the National Bank, despite the rate cut, monetary policy remains tight, ensuring a return of inflation to the target level in the medium term. The Monetary Policy Committee will exit the tight monetary policy stance gradually and further steps will depend on how quickly inflation expectations recede. The next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee will be held on June 24, 2020.

Figure 23: Inflation and Monetary Policy Rate



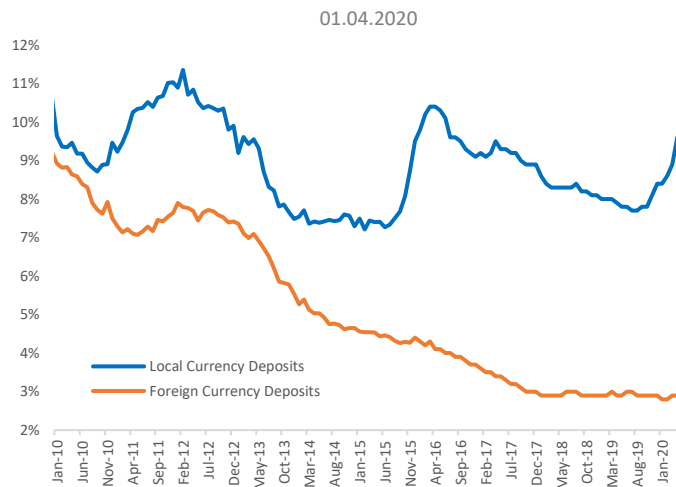
Source: NBG

Figure 22: Annual Growth of Deposits



Source: NBG

Figure 24: Interest rates on Deposits (stock)



Source: NBG

Interest Rates

As of April 2020, the interest rate on foreign currency deposits was 2.9 percent, while the national currency was 9.6 percent.

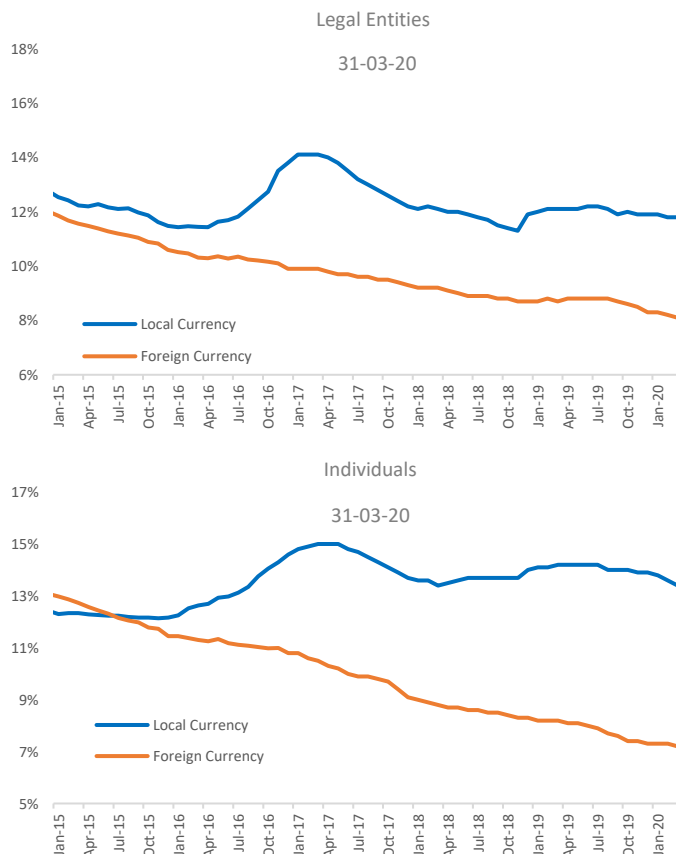
As of April 2020, the weighted average interest rate on deposits in national currency of legal entities was 10.6 percent, and in foreign currency - 2.5 percent. The average annual interest rate on deposits of individuals was 2.5 percent on deposits in foreign currency and 10.6 percent in national currency.

By April 2020, the weighted average annual interest rate on short-term consumer loans was 19.5 percent (25.7 percent in national currency and 6.1 percent in foreign currency).

Weighted average interest rates on long-term consumer loans are largely determined by loans denominated in the national currency. Its value for April 2020 was 16.5 percent. The interest rate on loans denominated in the national currency is 17.7 percent, and the interest rate on loans denominated in foreign currency is 8.3 percent.

At the end of March 2020, the interest rate on mortgage loans issued to legal entities issued was 12.3 percent, and in foreign currency - 7.0 percent. The interest rate on loans to individuals in national currency was 12.0 percent, and in foreign currency it was 6.2 percent.

Figure 25: Interest rates on Loans secured by Real Estate



Source: NBG

Credit Ratings

International rating agency Fitch Ratings has decided to reduce Georgia's sovereign rating from "BB Stable" to "BB Negative". The marked decrease is associated with uncertainty and increased risks caused by COVID-19. The organization proposes a 4.8% reduction in Georgia's GDP. Fitch expects the country to increase its budget deficit to 8.6% in 2020, which is linked to reduced tax revenues and increased budget spending. Fitch expects the global economy to go through a deep but short-lived recession in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, eurozone GDP is expected to fall by 4.2% in 2020, followed by 2.9% growth. At the same time, according to Moody's and S&P, Georgia has Ba2 stable and BB stable ratings respectively.

Figure 26: Interest rates on Loans secured by Real Estate



Source: Credit Rating Agencies: Moody's, Fitch და S&P

Disclaimer

The outlook is prepared by the Department of Macroeconomic Analysis and Fiscal Policy Planning. Analytical information presented in the outlook does not represent official statistics.

