

## ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMICS VIETNAM QUARTERLY CHARTBOOK

12 APRIL 2012

### CONTRIBUTOR

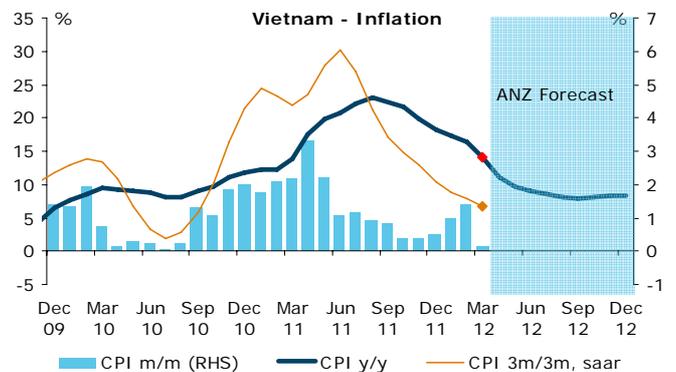
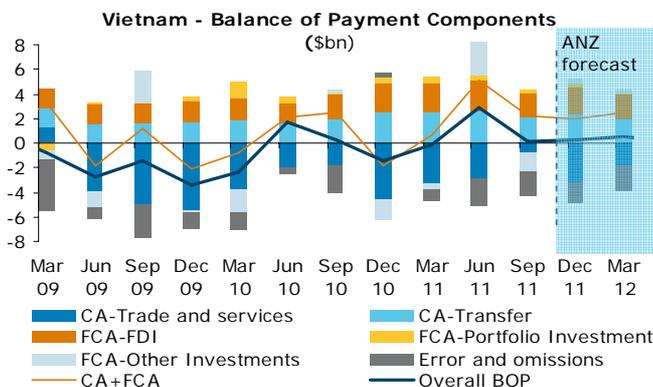
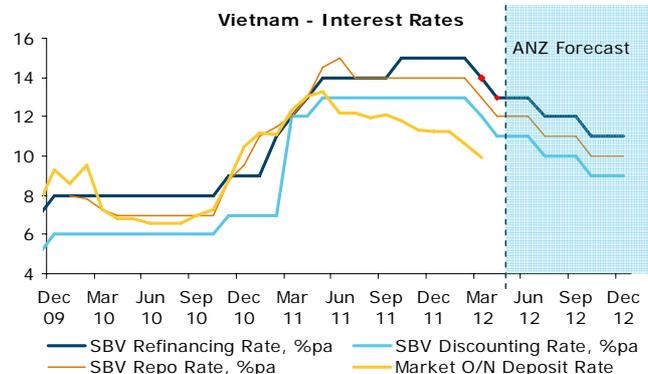
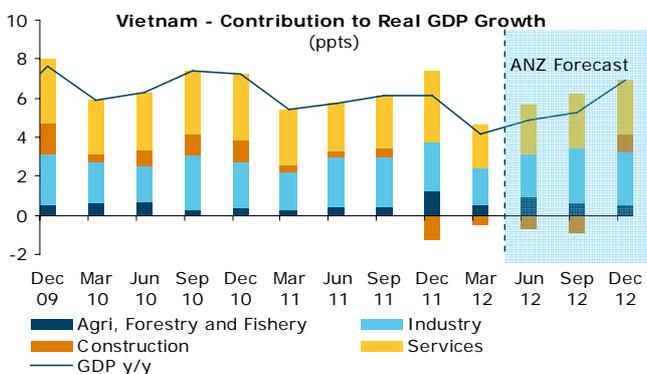
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### LOWER GROWTH AND INFLATION, THE SBV CUT RATES QUICKLY

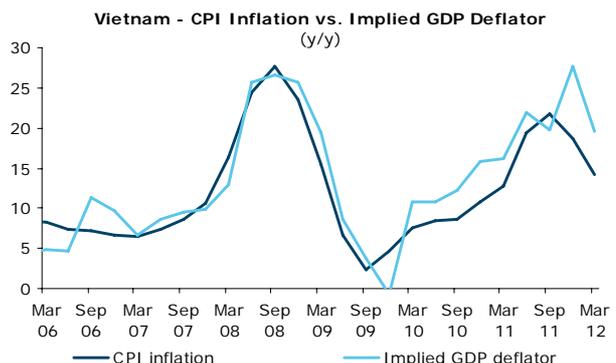
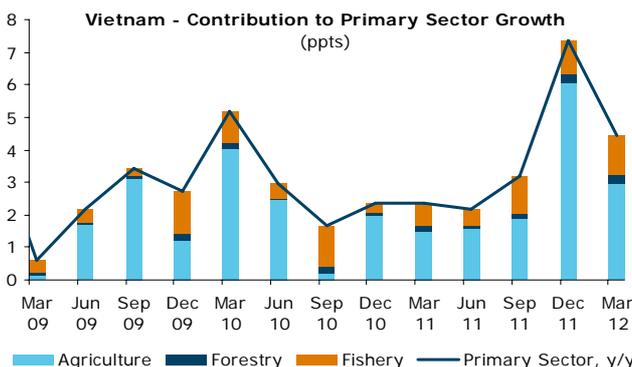
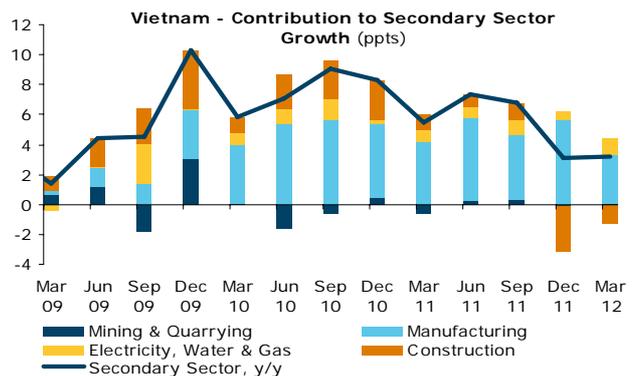
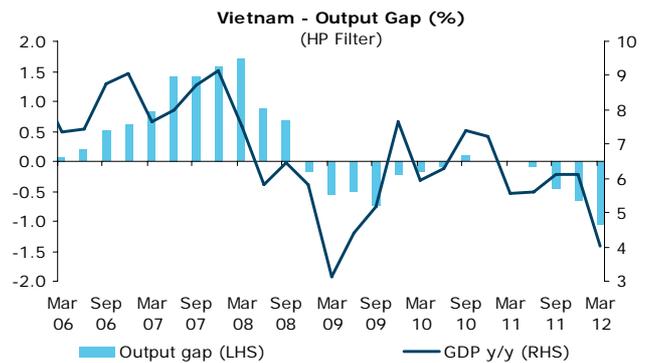
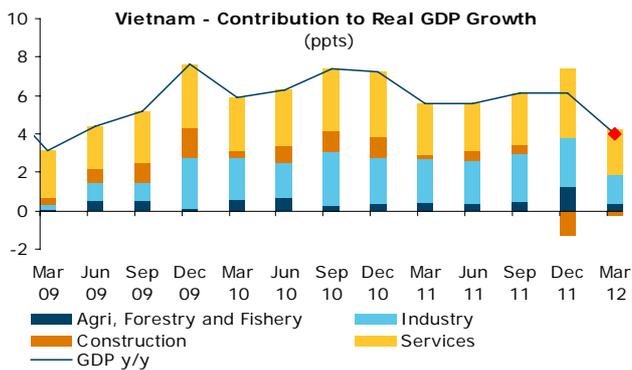
- Real GDP growth decelerated in Q1 to 4.0% y/y from 6.1% in Q4 last year as domestic demand slumped, a result of tightened monetary settings. CPI inflation fell to 14.2% in March 2012.
- The trade deficit narrowed significantly as import growth slowed much more than exports, supporting the dong's stability in Q1. We have observed structural changes to the trade profile as electronics and mobile phone exports (and imports) surged.
- The SBV cut its key policy rates by 100bps in March and another 100bps in April. Market interest rates fell drastically following the first policy move in March. The quickening pace of monetary easing worries us.
- We expect GDP growth to pick up in H2 on loosened policies, and 2012 growth to be at 5.5%. The overall growth slowdown will help bring inflation down to single digits in Q3.

### FEATURED CHARTS



### REAL ACTIVITY: Q1 GROWTH SLOWED MORE THAN EXPECTED, SUGGESTING LOWER GROWTH PROSPECTS FOR 2012 AS A WHOLE

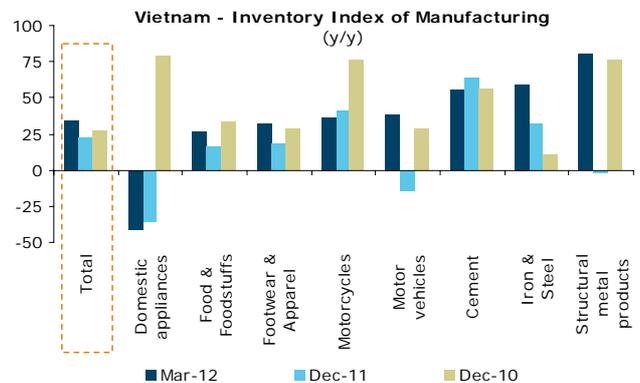
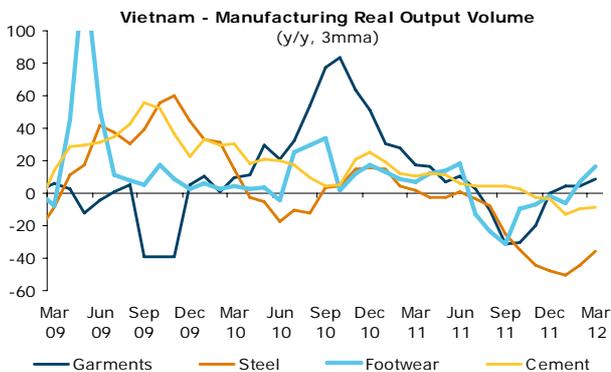
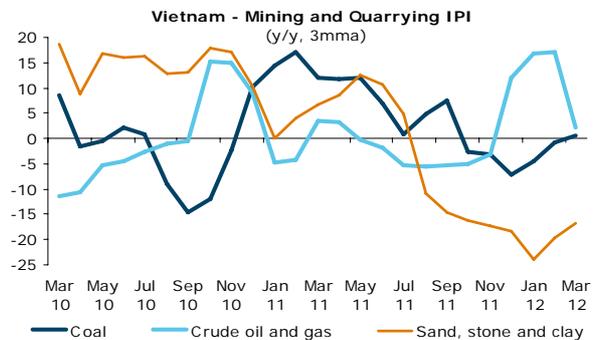
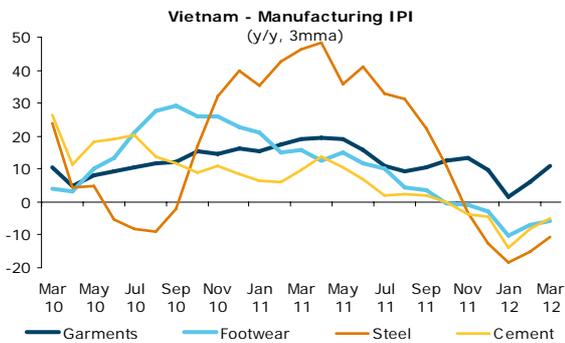
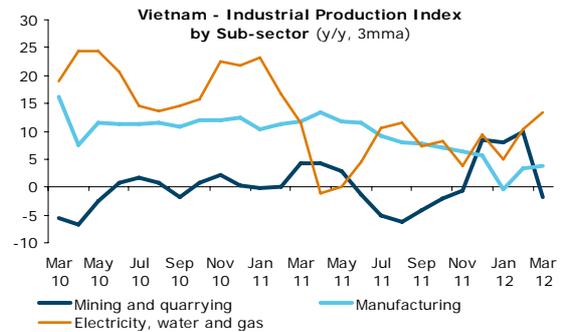
- Real GDP growth in Q1 decelerated to 4.0% y/y from 6.1% in Q4 last year. This was the second-lowest y/y growth figure in more than a decade, and only marginally better than the result of Q1 2009. We estimate the output gap to have widened, suggesting lower demand-side price pressures going forward.
- The broad-based slowdown was more than we had expected with y/y growth across sectors falling below their long-term averages: growth in both industry and construction were at their lowest levels since Q1 2009, and services growth was at its lowest level in five years.
- Construction's contraction was less than in Q4 2011 on base effects, but continued to drag down overall growth by 0.24ppt. The sector is interest-rate sensitive and has been affected the most by tightened monetary policy since Q3 2011, especially as credit for real estate investment was discouraged.
- We expect growth to pick up in H2, but have revised down our 2012 growth forecast to 5.5% as the low start in Q1 makes the government's 6.0% growth target difficult to achieve. However, Vietnam's data releases are subjected to revision, and Q1 data should always be treated with care due to its unstable seasonality.



Sources: CEIC, ANZ Research

## INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION: HIGH INVENTORY POINTS TO FUTURE WEAKNESS IN GROWTH

- The industrial production index (IPI)<sup>1</sup> climbed 4.1% y/y in Q1 (official report), down from 6.6% in the previous quarter (our estimate). Growth in manufacturing and mining-quarrying IPIs, the main drivers of the overall IPI, slowed, whereas growth in the electricity, water and gas IPI picked up.
- The mining-quarrying IPI contracted after a one-off rebound in the previous quarter, as growth in the crude oil IPI decelerated. The coal IPI rebound, up 0.5% y/y in Q1 after having contracted 7.1% in Q4 last year.
- The manufacturing IPI picked up gradually in the first three months of 2012, but growth for the quarter as a whole trended lower from Q4 2011. The garment and footwear IPIs picked up, whereas the construction-linked sub-indices of steel and cement continued to contract.
- Notably, the inventory index of manufacturing grew 34.9% y/y in Q1, up from 23.0% in Q4 last year, and was even higher than inventory growth of Q1 2009. Inventory growth increased in most industries, suggesting that low industrial production growth will likely continue in Q2.

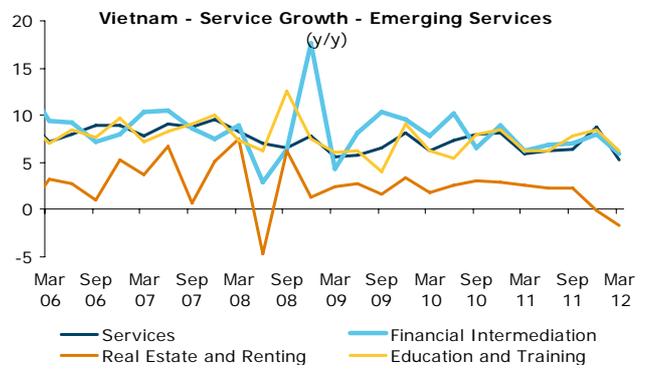
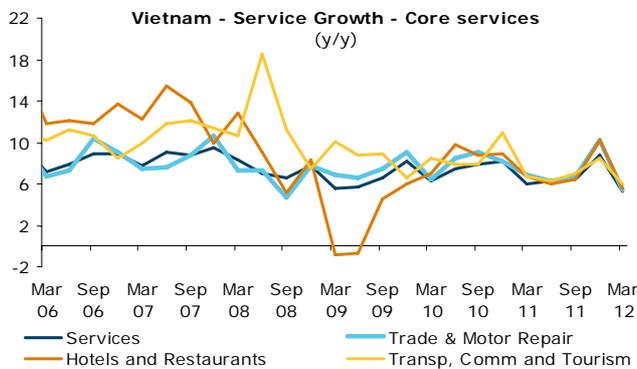
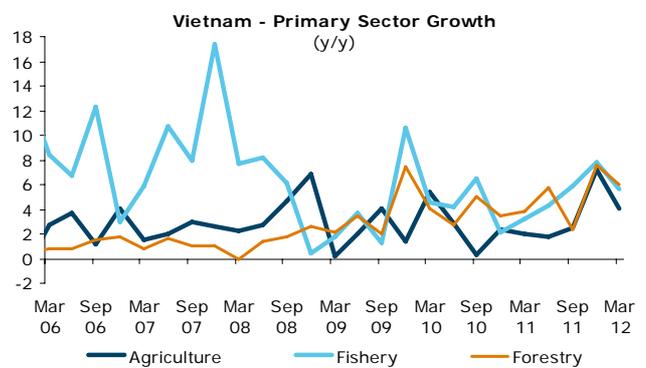
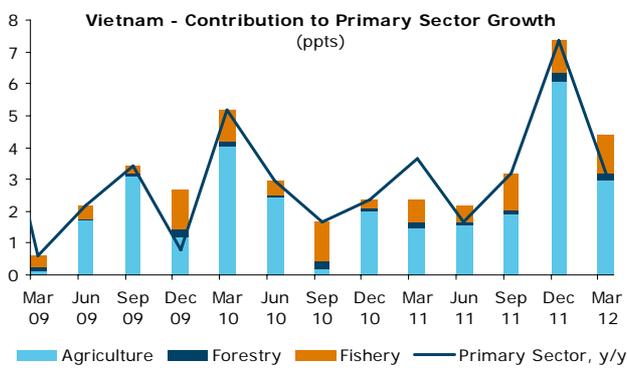


Sources: CEIC, General Statistics Office of Vietnam, ANZ Research

<sup>1</sup> The industrial production index (IPI) is a new series that uses a 2005-based product sample, while the industrial production output series used in GDP accounting uses a 1994-based product sample.

**PRIMARY AND TERTIARY SECTORS: A SIMILAR SLOWDOWN ACROSS THE BOARD**

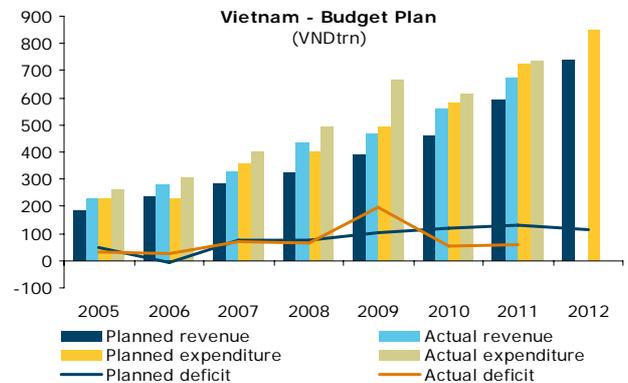
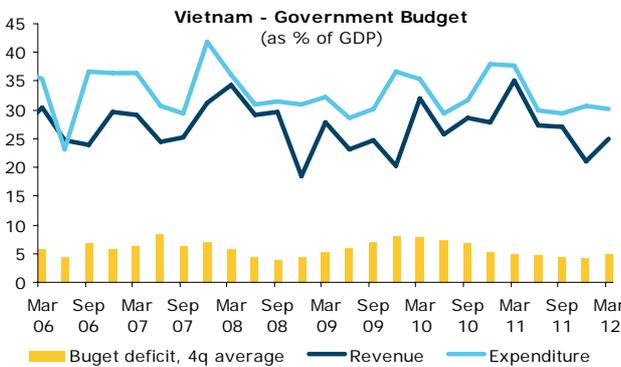
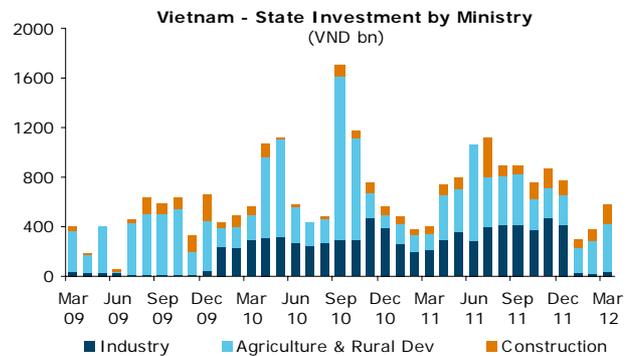
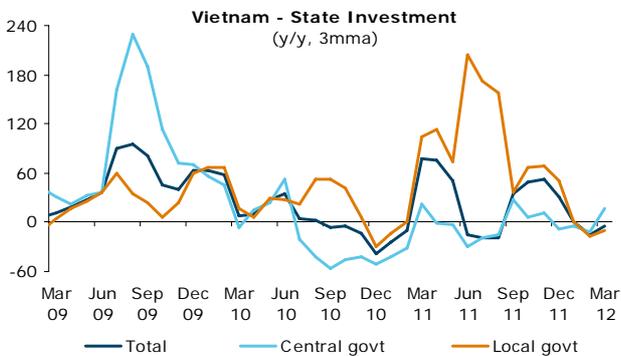
- Primary sector growth decelerated across the board to 3.1% y/y in Q1 from 7.4% in Q4 2011. Agriculture growth fell as the winter-spring crop came later than last year's and the harsh winter affected cattle farming in the north.
- Tertiary (services) sector growth also fell on a broad-based basis to 5.3% y/y from 8.7% in Q4 last year. Real estate and renting services contracted for the second quarter, by 1.7% y/y, in line with the contraction in construction output.
- Turning to tourism, inbound visitor arrivals totalled 1.8m, up from 1.7m in the previous quarter. However, visitor arrival growth eased to 24.0% y/y from 29.1% in Q4 last year.



Sources: CEIC, ANZ Research

**STATE INVESTMENT AND BUDGET: 2012 BUDGET REVENUE MAY BE AFFECTED BY SLOW GROWTH**

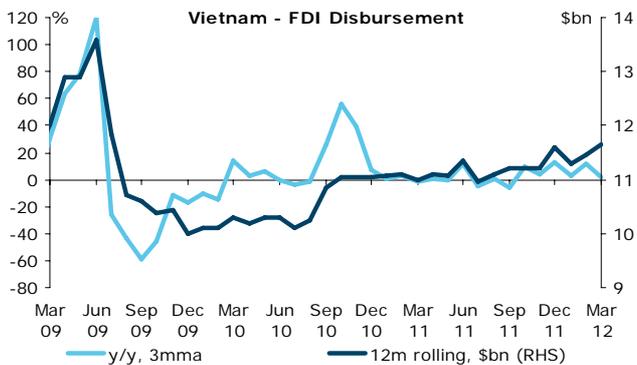
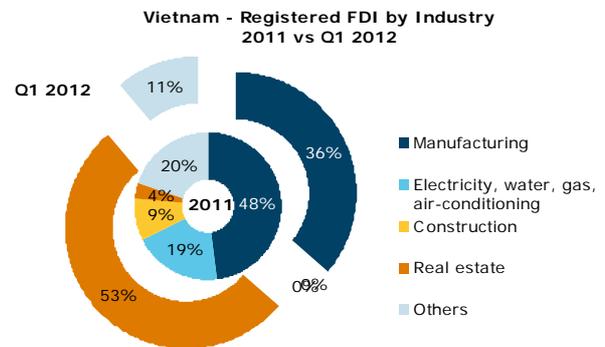
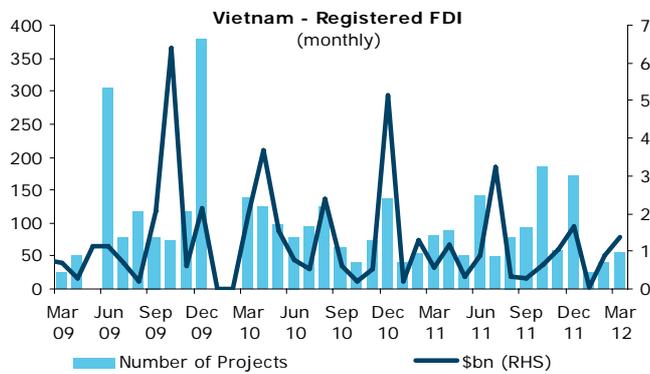
- Total state investment contracted 4.9% y/y in Q1 this year, compared with 31.5% growth in Q4 and 78.3% increase in Q1 last year. Local government spending, which accounts for more than 70% of total spending, fell 10.5%, whereas central government spending increased by 16.3%.
- Budget expenditure fell 1.3% y/y, whereas revenue decreased 12.0% in Q1 as corporate tax revenue fell. Consequently, the overall budget deficit totalled VND28trn or 5.1% of GDP, compared with 2.6% of GDP in Q1 last year. The government plans a budget deficit of VND140.2trn in 2012, or less than 5.0% of its projected GDP (2011 budget deficit totalled 4.8% of GDP.)
- While tight fiscal spending will likely continue throughout this year, lower budget revenue due to a slowdown in growth, as seen in Q1 data, is also likely. Thus, improving the fiscal balance this year may prove a more challenging task than expected.



Sources: CEIC, GSO, ANZ Research

## INVESTMENT FLOWS: FDI FELL DESPITE BIG INVESTMENTS BY JAPAN; NET PORTFOLIO OUTFLOWS CONTINUED DESPITE VNINDEX'S GAIN

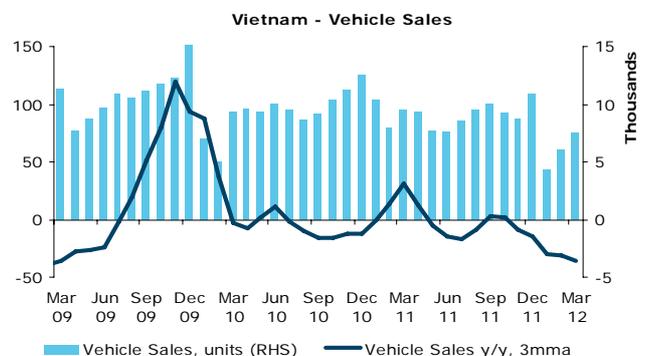
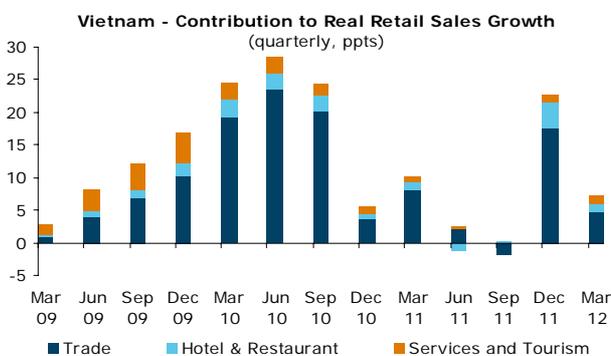
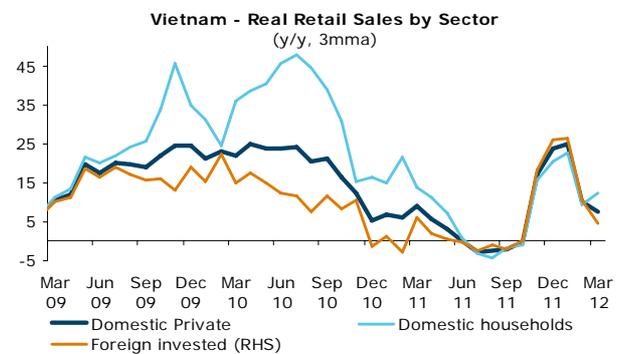
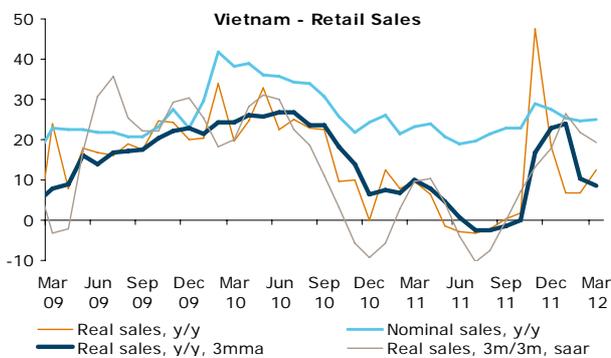
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Newly registered FDI inflows fell 22.8% y/y in Q1 and totalled \$2.3bn. Disbursed FDI also fell marginally, to \$2.5bn.
- Japanese FDI accounted for 92.6% of totalled registered FDI in Q1, with one Japanese real estate development project in Binh Duong province accounted for more than half of that total figure. Real estate and renting businesses attracted only 4% of total FDI inflows last year.
- Portfolio Investment:** Vietnam recorded net foreign equity outflows for the third consecutive quarter in Q1, totalling \$60.8m of net outflows, despite a 13.7% gain of the VN Index.
- However, taking out ANZ's divestment from the country's Sacombank in January, Vietnam recorded modest net portfolio inflows in Q1, in line with AXJ regional equity flow profile in early 2012's risk-on environment.



Sources: General Statistics Office (GSO), CEIC, Bloomberg, ANZ Research

### CONSUMPTION: RETAIL DEMAND GROWTH FELL ON TIGHTER CREDIT

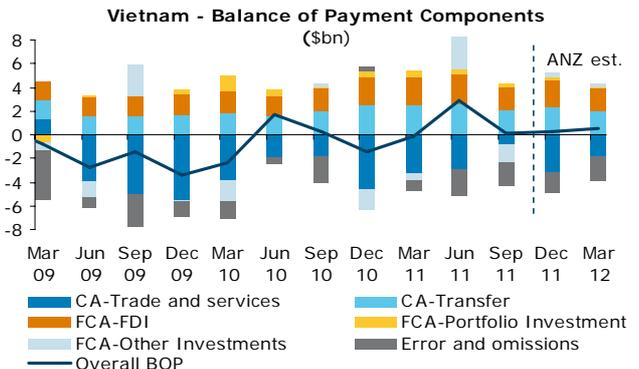
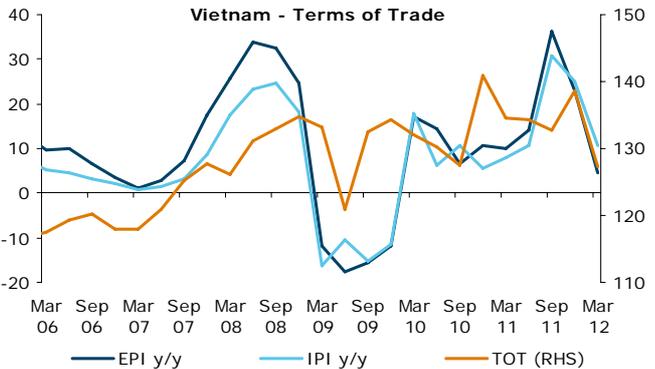
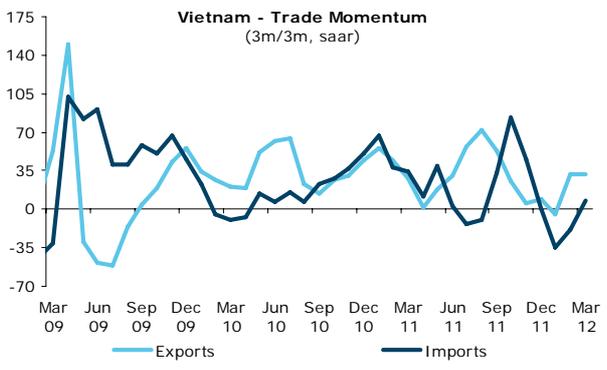
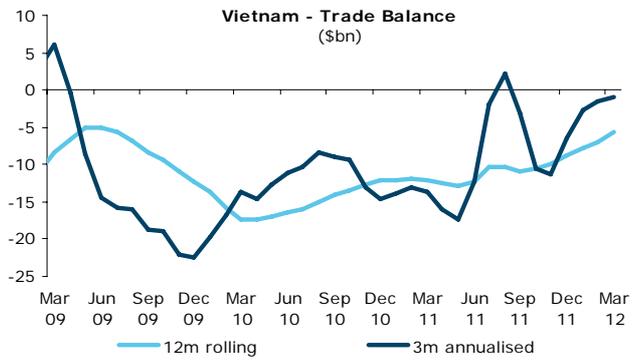
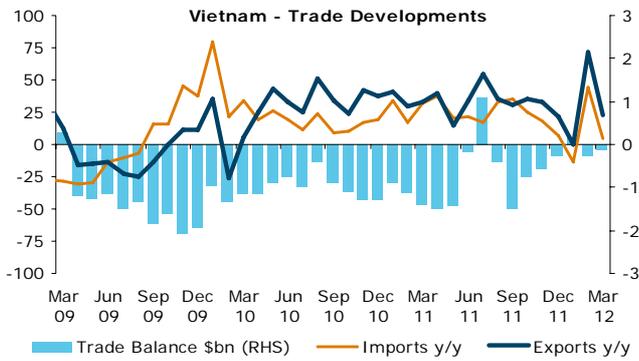
- Nominal retail sales fell to 21.8% y/y (official calculation) for Q1 as a whole, from 26.5% in the previous quarter, even though festival-linked demand pushed growth up in February. The slowdown was broad-based. We estimate real (CPI adjusted) sales growth to have slumped as well.
- However, sales growth picked up for the second quarter on a momentum basis (3m/3m, saar). We note that the seasonally adjusted data were likely distorted by the early Tet holiday, which caused growth momentum to peak in January and trended down in the last two months.
- Vehicle sales continued to contract in early 2012, by 35.8% y/y in Q1, compared with a 15.1% decline in Q4 last year. Car sales have been affected by increased restrictions on car imports, tightened credit policies, higher registration fees and potential road charges in the major cities.



Sources: CEIC, Bloomberg, ANZ Research

**FOREIGN TRADE: THE TRADE DEFICIT NARROWED SIGNIFICANTLY, SUPPORTING THE BOP**

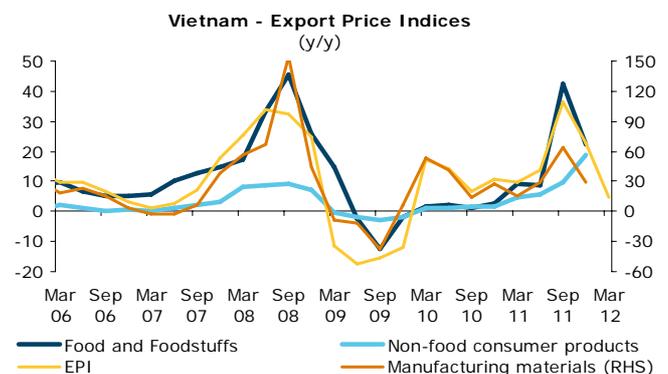
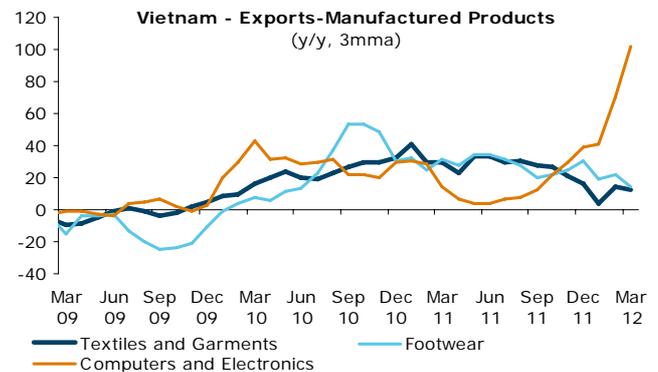
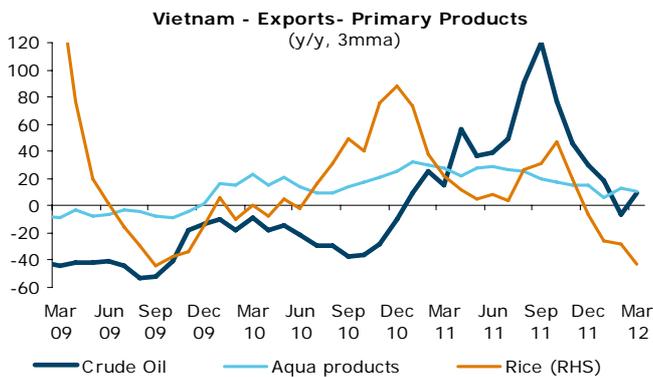
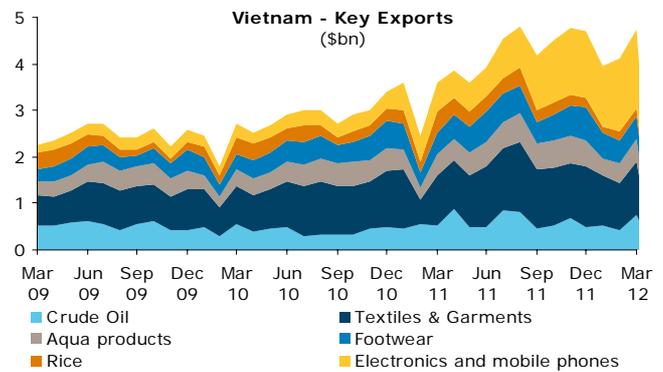
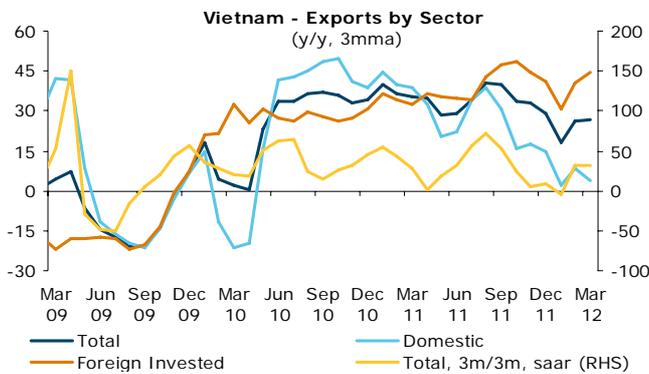
- For Q1 as a whole, both export and import growth continued to decline, to 26.6% and 8.9% y/y, respectively, from 29.3% and 16.2% in the previous quarter. However, monthly data show that y/y growth bottomed out in February and March (February data is Lunar-distorted nevertheless).
- Both export and import growth momentum (3m/3m, saar) rebounded, suggesting higher growth in the next few months.
- The Q1 trade deficit narrowed to the lowest level since Q1 2009, as import growth fell much more quickly than exports. We expect this significant development to have offset the decline in foreign investment flows and thus helped the overall balance of payments maintain a small surplus. This, in turn, suggests continued short-term stability of the VND.
- The terms of trade deteriorated in Q1, as the export price index fell (q/q) more than the import price index (IPI).



Sources: CEIC, ANZ Research

## EXPORTS: ONGOING STRUCTURAL CHANGE WITH ELECTRONICS AND MOBILE PHONE EXPORTS RISING

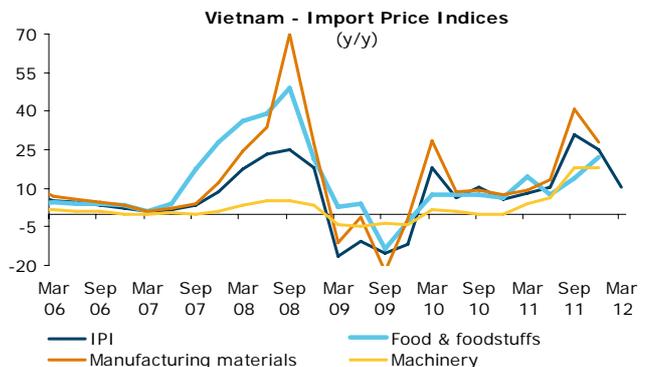
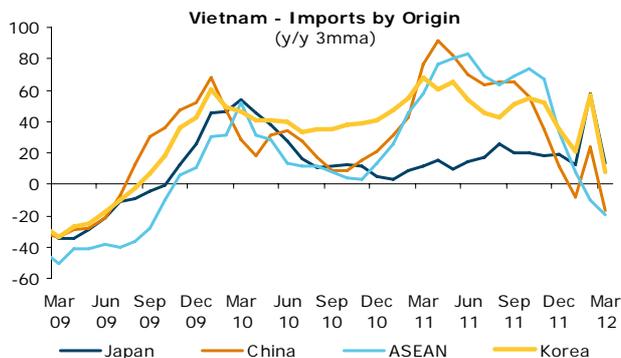
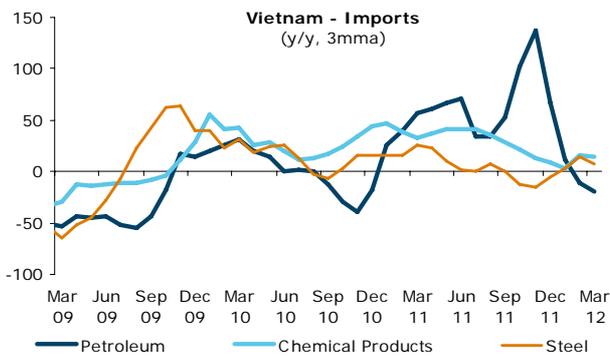
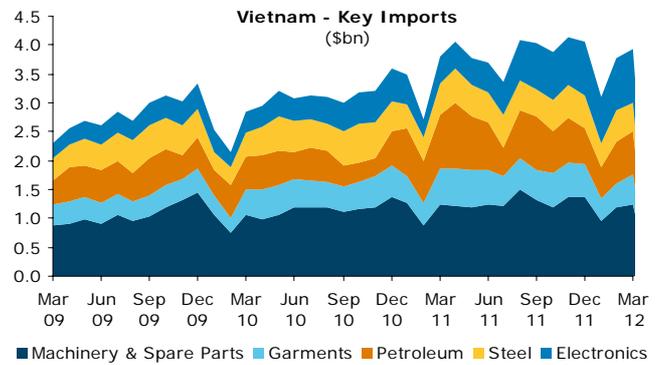
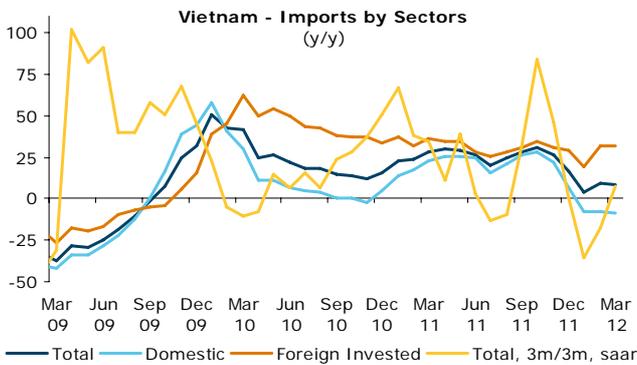
- Exports expanded 26.6% y/y in Q1, with growth momentum rebounding to 32.1% 3m/3m, saar, from 8.6% in the previous quarter, signalling that exports will likely remain healthy in the coming months.
- Primary exports remained weak as rice shipment growth in particular fell rapidly for the second quarter by 42.7%. Crude oil export growth also fell to 9.8% y/y from 29.6% in the previous quarter due to a 7.7% contraction in volume growth (not shown).
- Some major electronics and mobile phone producers went into full operation in Q4 last year. Electronics shipments climbed to a record high of 101.6% y/y in Q1 and contributed 4.4ppts to overall export growth. Shipments of mobile phones and parts also accelerated to account for more than 10% of Q1 total exports. Footwear and garment growth eased.
- By destination, growth of exports to ASEAN continued to accelerate, while that to EU and the US eased.
- The export price index climbed 4.6% y/y in Q1, down from 23.0% in Q4 last year.



Sources: CEIC, GSO, ANZ Research

**IMPORTS: GROWTH FELL ACROSS THE BOARD, ELECTRONICS BEING THE EXCEPTION**

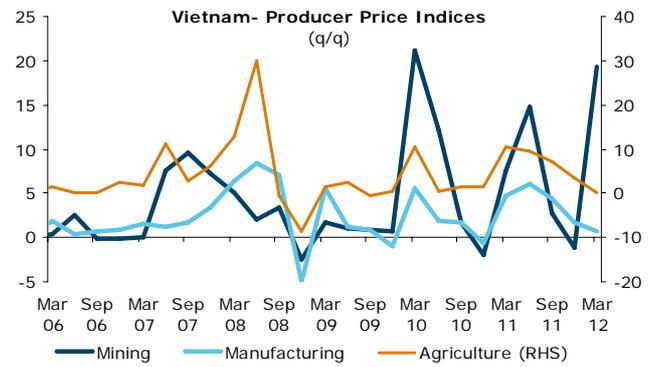
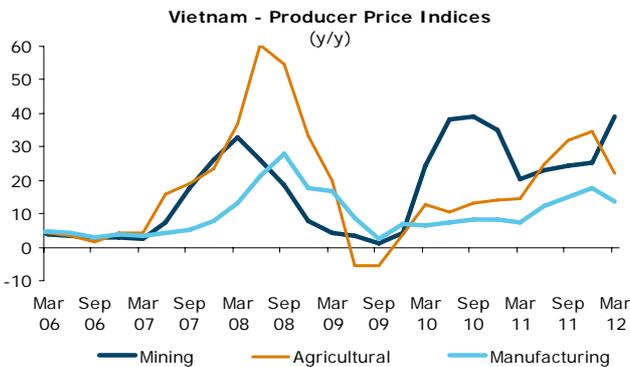
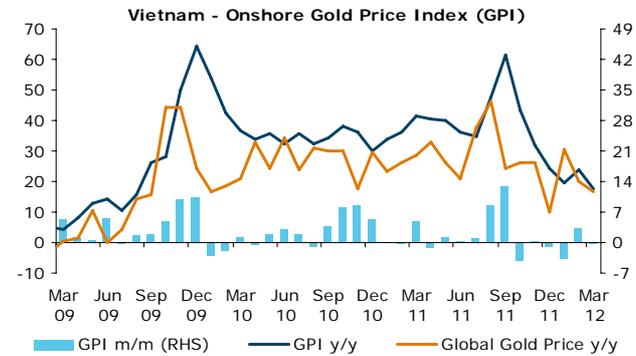
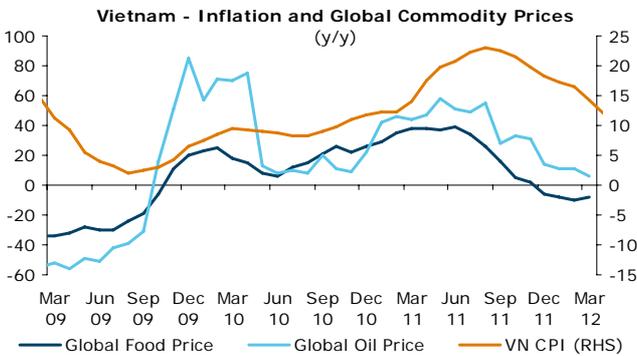
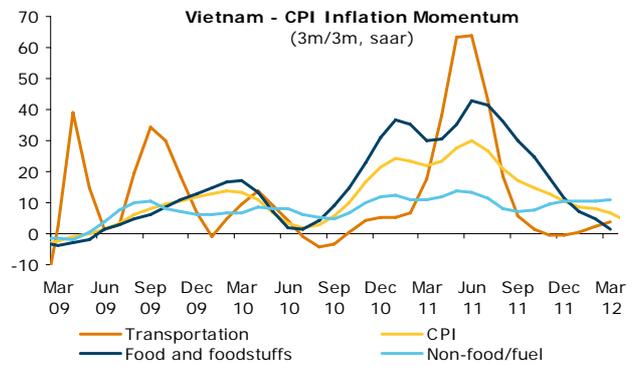
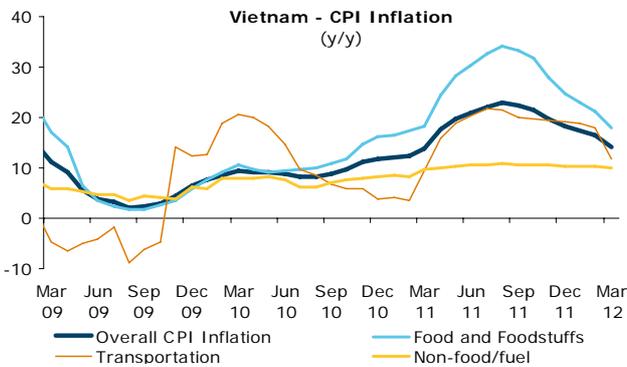
- Q1 import growth remained weak across all sectors, industries (bar electronics), and countries of origin, as domestic demand slumped on tight policy settings. Growth momentum rebounded, however, suggesting stronger imports going forward.
- Electronics import growth accelerated at a similar pace to electronics exports, suggesting that Vietnam likely remains reliant on part imports for the manufacturing of its high-tech exports.
- The surge in electronics trade also suggests that the country is realising its cost advantages and is now a rising assembly point for global electronics and IT firms. This will bring about important structural changes to the economy in the medium and long term.
- In terms of origin, imports from China and ASEAN contracted for the first time since Q2 2009. Growth of imports from Korea decelerated, while that from Japan fell.
- The import price index climbed 10.6% y/y in Q1, down from 24.9% in the previous quarter.



Sources: CEIC, ANZ Research

**PRICES: SINGLE-DIGIT INFLATION LIKELY IN Q3**

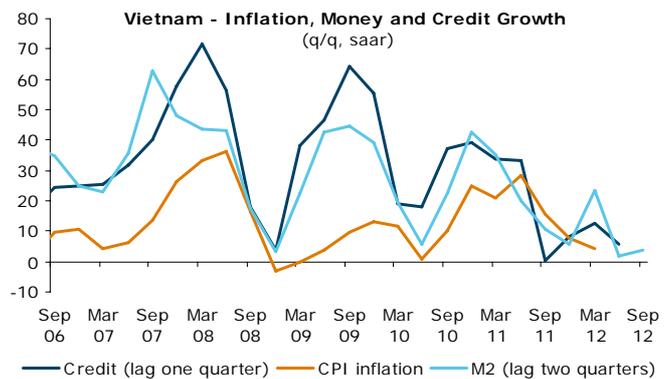
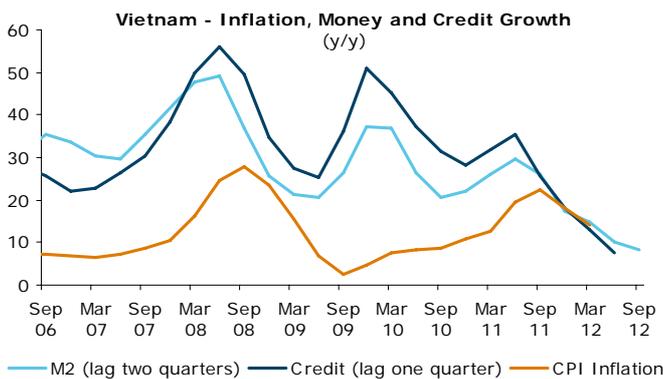
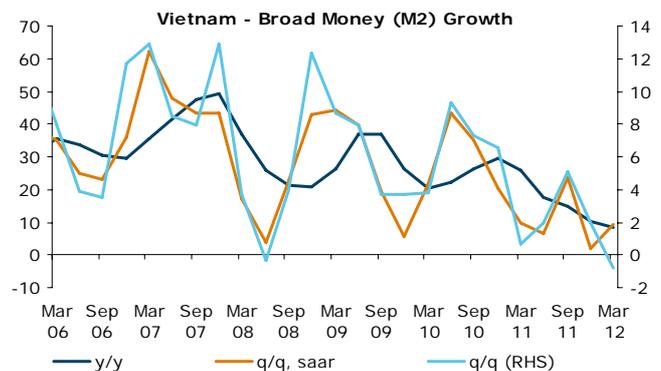
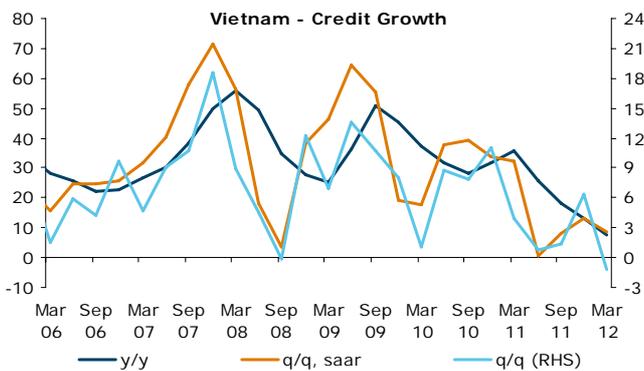
- CPI inflation decelerated to 14.2% y/y in March from its peak of 23.0% in August 2011. The decline was mostly due to decreased food prices, while non-food/fuel inflation eased a modest 1.0ppt from its peak last August to 10.0% in March.
- Inflation momentum fell to single digits in Q1, suggesting headline inflation will fall further in the coming months. We expect the government's single-digit inflation target will be reached in Q3, barring any surprise in global commodity prices.
- Onshore gold price eased marginally in Q1 despite increased global prices, as the VND gained from last year. The onshore-offshore gold price gap narrowed as a result.
- Mining PPI inflation surged as coal PPI accelerated while crude oil and gas PPI fell in Q1. Meanwhile, manufacturing and agriculture PPI inflation eased both q/q and y/y, suggesting that input cost pressure on CPI inflation remains moderate going forward.



Sources: CEIC, Bloomberg, ANZ Research

**MONEY AND CREDIT: Q1 CREDIT CONTRACTED, BUT EASIER MONETARY SETTINGS SHOULD INCREASE GROWTH**

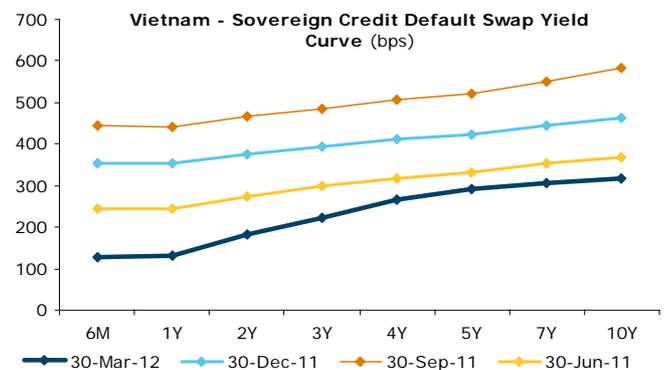
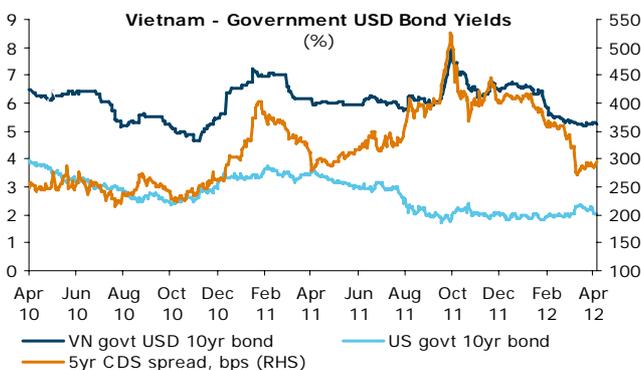
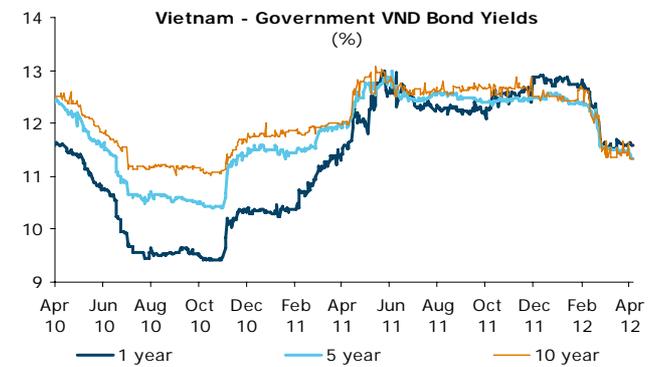
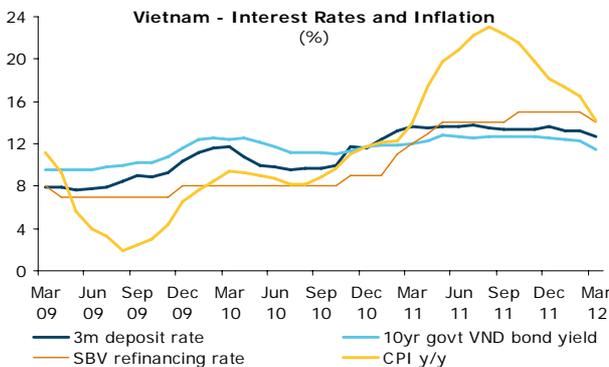
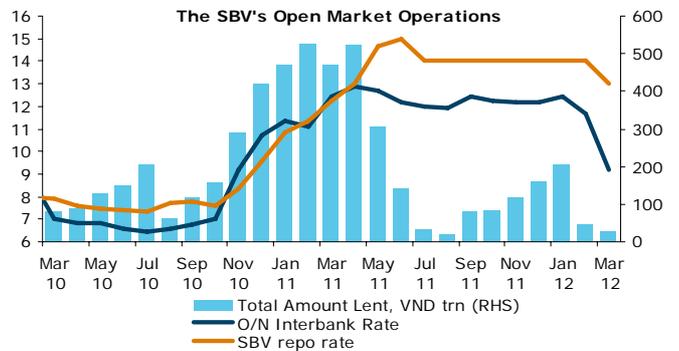
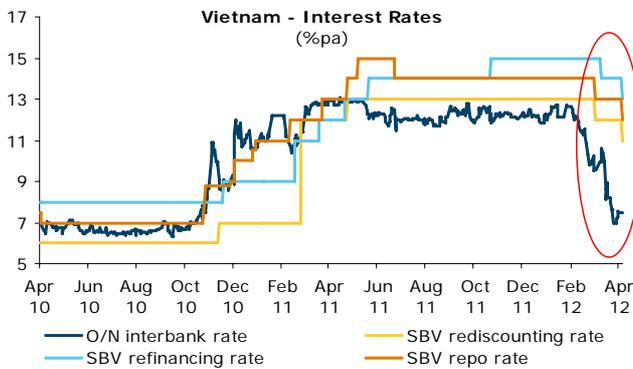
- Tighter policy settings continued to result in low credit and money growth in early 2012. Domestic credit fell 0.53% in February from December 2011, whereas broad money supply (M2) fell 0.11% in the period, according to a SBV report.
- We expect both credit and money growth to have fallen on a quarterly basis in Q1, for the first time since Q3 2008. Y/Y credit and money growth must have declined to a new single-digit record low. On sequential basis, credit growth fell, whereas M2 growth edged up.
- The contraction of credit and money supply in the quarter is consistent with lower GDP growth prospects this year and the potential fall of CPI inflation to below 10% in Q3.
- Nevertheless, as monetary easing will likely continue throughout this year, we expect credit and money growth will pick up gradually in H2 and support growth. The SBV has set 2012 targets for M2 and credit growth at 14-16% and 15-17%, respectively, versus 2011 growth of 10% and 13%.



Sources: CEIC, State Bank of Vietnam (SBV), ANZ Research

**RATES: MONETARY EASING CYCLE STARTED; BONDS RALLIED ON MACRO STABILITY PROSPECTS**

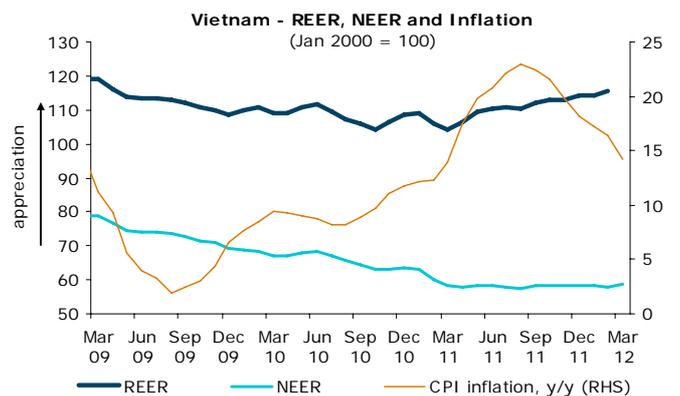
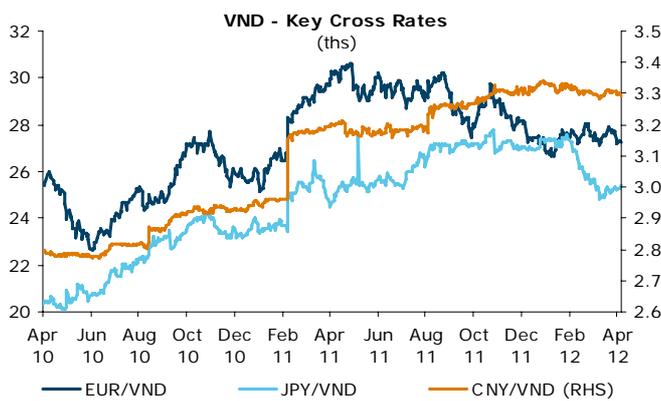
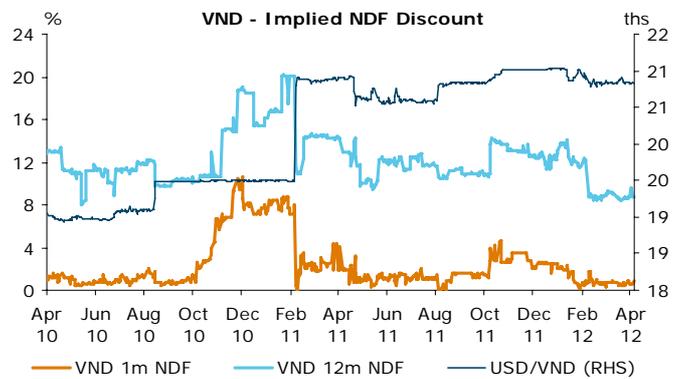
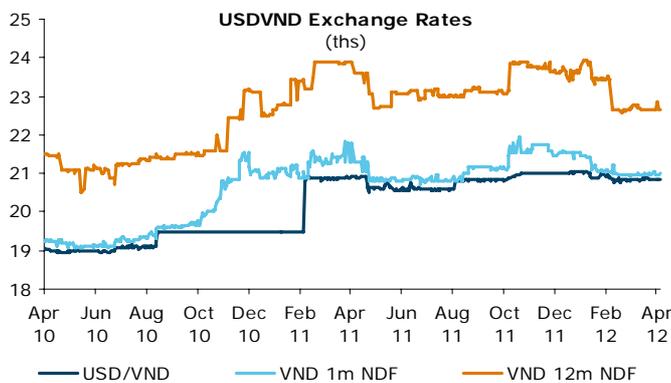
- The SBV started its monetary cycle in March by cutting its key policy rates by 100bps each, and cut rates by another 100bps on 10<sup>th</sup> April. Although the governor continued to expect key policy rates to be cut by about 100bps each quarter this year, the quickening pace of monetary easing worries us (See *our Vietnam Update, 19 March, Vietnam Data Alert, 29 March, and Vietnam Policy Alert, 10 April*).
- Market interbank interest rate fell sharply to below 10% currently following the first policy move in March, and for the first time in more than a year. Bank liquidity was ample in Q1, spurring higher demand for VND government bonds and pushed yields down by more than 1.0ppt.
- The government USD bonds also rallied in Q1 on both domestic macro stability prospects and improved global market sentiment. The 5-year CDS spread against US treasuries fell the most (in absolute terms) in Asia, by more than 100bps, and its yield curve steepened.



Sources: Bloomberg, SBV, ANZ Research

**FOREIGN EXCHANGE: STABILITY MAINTAINED, EXPECT SMALL DEPRECIATION IN 2012**

- The small trade deficit, overall BOP surplus, and easing inflation continued to keep the dong relatively stable in early 2012. The offshore NDF discounts also imply low short-term depreciating pressures, although the market continues to expect the currency to depreciate in the next 12 months.
- Meanwhile, the dong’s real effective exchange rate (REER) appreciated by 1.2% in January – February from the end of last year, despite the nominal effective exchange rate’s (NEER) 0.7% depreciation, as the inflation gap remains between Vietnam and its major trading partners.
- The real high appreciation implies lower competitiveness for Vietnamese exports and may place more pressure on the BOP and the nominal exchange rate.
- We expect the trade deficit to widen again in H2 as the monetary easing supports higher domestic demand and results in higher imports. Thus, we continue to expect further depreciation of the VND in 2012, of about 3%, versus 8% depreciation in 2011.



Sources: Bloomberg, ANZ Research

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