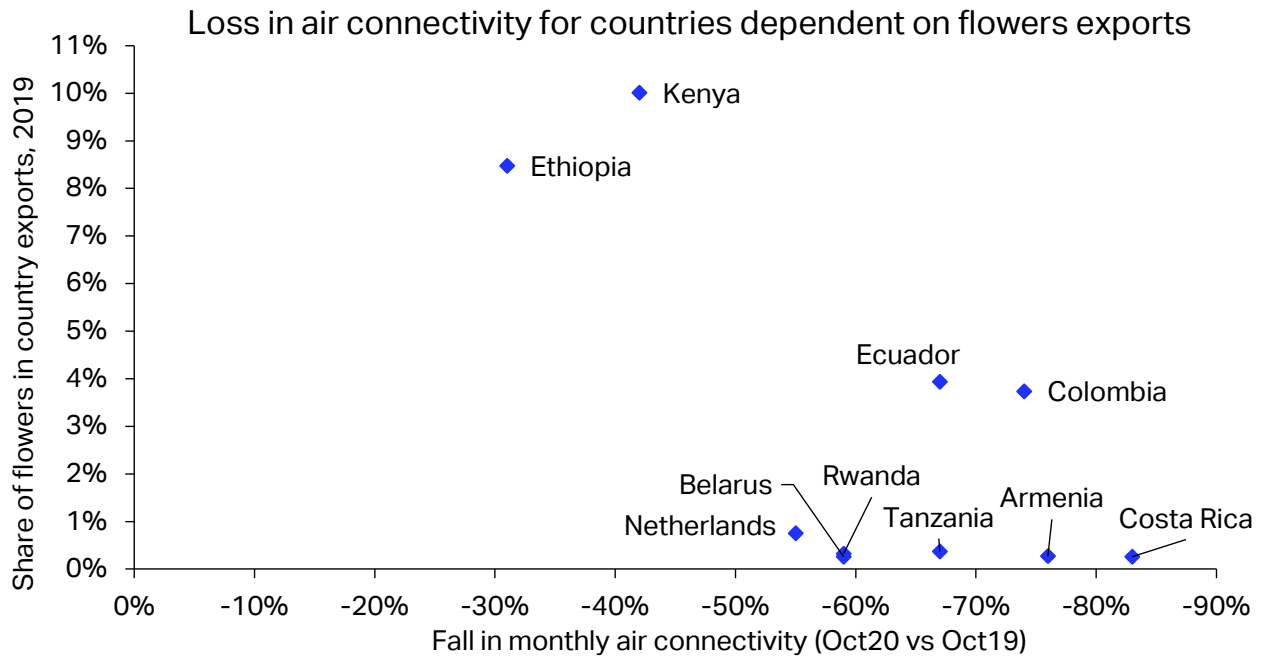




Loss of air cargo connectivity threatens key flower exporters



Source: ITC Trade Map, IATA Economics

- On February 14th was Valentine's Day, which offered lovebirds a moment's happiness in the midst of the pandemic. But if you said it with flowers, did you know that they were likely to have come from afar?
- Indeed, countries such as the Netherlands, Kenya and Colombia account for a large share of total fresh flowers exports. In Kenya and Ethiopia in particular, this category represents around 10% of total exports for the country, a crucial source of revenues for farmers and small businesses. The top 10 countries with the largest share of flowers in their exports are included in the above chart.
- Flowers are typically carried by air because of their perishable nature. They are often carried using freighters, but those transported in the belly of passenger aircraft have been impacted by the lack of capacity due to the loss of air passenger connectivity. Even though African countries were often less impacted, passenger connectivity as measured by [the IATA connectivity index](#) fell by roughly 40% in Kenya and 30% in Ethiopia in October year-on-year. This was further compounded by lockdowns in some of the main importers, which have reduced the demand for cut flowers. Indeed, flowers exports in Kenya, Colombia and the Netherlands fell by respectively around 70%, 25% and 15% in 2020.
- On top of Valentine's Day (20% of all flowers sold in the US in a year), Mother's Day – friendly reminder, this is on May 9th – and the year-end celebrations are the key dates for flowers sales, with respectively 25% and 30% of all flowers sold in the US, according to AboutFlowers.com.
- This note highlights the importance of maintaining air connectivity for cargo shipments, which matters for loved ones, but also to support developing economies dependent on trade of perishables and to allow distributing vaccines and their components.