

Malaysia Autos Report Q4 2011

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Business Monitor International

Date: September 1, 2011

Pages: 50

Price: US\$ 1,175.00

ID: M94C354AA15EN

Includes 3 FREE quarterly updates

Although BMI has revised down its Malaysian passenger car sales growth forecast for 2011 from 4.3% to 2%, amendments to the Hire Purchase (HP) Act, which had aroused concerns among industry players, have now been revised and should enable total vehicle sales to still reach record levels. The recovery of the supply chain for Japanese carmakers will also ensure sales in H211 are an improvement following the disruption in Q211, which means even our now lower total vehicle sales forecast of 617,875 units will still be a record. Total vehicle sales for H111 were down 1.3% year-on-year (y-o-y), to 297,203 units.

Although not all of the amendments to the HP Act introduced in June have been scrapped, the president of the Malaysian Automotive Association (MAA), Aishah Ahmad, has welcomed the move, saying registrations will be made easier. BMI believes the measure, coupled with improved supplies as Japanese carmakers return to normal production, will help passenger car sales return to normal growth levels by the end of Q311. The passenger car segment dragged on total sales, falling 2.3%, to 265,654 units.

The commercial vehicle segment, on the other hand, was up 8% in H111, to 31,549 units. The MAA says this is because most Japan-based commercial vehicle plants are in the south of the country, which ensured vehicle supplies were not impacted to the same extent as passenger cars. As a result, BMI has retained its original sales forecast for the segment of 63,400 units.

International brands are still targeting the passenger car segment, however. French automaker Peugeot is considering manufacturing its 408 sedan in Malaysia to serve the right-hand-drive (RHD) segment of the country, according to its Australian subsidiary. Peugeot is assessing the market prospects for the RHD version of the sedan, according to Ken Thomas, the general manager of Peugeot Automobiles Australia. The company is also examining the economies of scale that can be achieved by exporting the sedan, which is currently only available as left hand drive, to other RHD markets including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Japan and the ASEAN region.

Among the sector's newcomers, Japanese vehicle manufacturer Fuji Heavy Industries will begin the assembly of Subaru branded SUVs in Malaysia in October 2012. The company has signed a memorandum of understanding with Malaysian vehicle distributor Tan Chong to produce 5,000 vehicles in the country, reports Bernama. The vehicles will then be sold via Tan Chong locally and in Thailand and Indonesia.

Table of Content

Executive Summary
SWOT Analysis
Malaysia Auto Industry SWOT
Malaysia Political SWOT
Malaysia Economic SWOT
Malaysia Business Environment SWOT
Global Overview
BMI's Core Views For The Automotives Industry
Asia Pacific Regional Overview

Supplier View Plays Out As Hyundai Mobis Wins US\$233mn Japanese Order
Business Environment Ratings
Table: Business Environment Ratings -- Auto Industry Asia Pacific
Macroeconomic Forecast Scenario
Table: Malaysia - Economic Activity, 2008-2015
Industry Forecast Scenario
Production and Sales
Table: Malaysia Autos Sector: Historical Data And Forecasts, 2008-2015
Trade
Table: Malaysia Autos Sector: Historical Data And Forecasts, 2008-2015
Competitive Landscape
Table: Malaysian Passenger Vehicle Sales
Industry Developments
Passenger Vehicles – Forecast & Analysis
Production And Sales
Table: Malaysia Autos Sector: Historical Data And Forecasts
Company Developments
Commercial Vehicles – Forecast & Analysis
Table: Malaysia Autos Sector: Historical Data And Forecasts, 2008-2015
Motorcycles – Forecast & Analysis
Production and Sales
Table: Malaysia Autos Sector: Historical Data And Forecasts, 2008-2015
Industry Developments
Company Monitor
BMI Favourites Feature In Nissan ASEAN Strategy
Stealing A March
The Rising Star
EMs Key To Growth
Company Profiles
Proton
Perodua
Toyota Motor
Honda Malaysia
Country Snapshot: Malaysia Demographic Data
Section 1: Population
Table: Demographic Indicators, 2005-2030
Table: Rural/Urban Breakdown, 2005-2030
Section 2: Education and Healthcare
Table: Education, 2000-2003
Table: Vital Statistics, 2005-2030
Section 3: Labour Market and Spending Power
Table: Employment Indicators, 2001-2006
Table: Consumer Expenditure, 2000-2012 (US\$)
Table: Average Annual Manufacturing Wages, 2000-2012
BMI Methodology
How We Generate Our Forecasting Model
Sources

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