

Indonesia Business Forecast Report Q3 2014

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Abstracts

Core Views

The election results will ultimately depend on whether the electorate clamours for reform or stability. If the preference is for the former, current Governor of Jakarta Joko Widodo (Jokowi) from the PDI-P will likely emerge victorious. If the inclination is towards stability, ex- General Prabowo Subianto (Gerindra) or prominent businessman Aburizal Bakrie (Golkar) are likely to be the frontrunners.

While we have yet to see his policy platform, Jokowi's ability to streamline bureaucratic inefficiencies, improve public finances, strike a balance between pro-business and pro-welfare policies, as well as willingness to take politically unpopular but necessary measures to right economic imbalances could provide some upside potential for the infrastructure, mining and oil and gas sectors.

Judging from the progressive deceleration in inflation, as well as a continuing fall in import demand, Bank Indonesia's (BI) monetary tightening appears to be exhibiting some measure of efficacy. In the near term, we do not expect BI to reverse its policy stance as it continues to allow policy measures to work their way through the economy. Towards the second half of the year, however, with inflation likely to fall within the BI's target range, coupled with an ongoing slowdown in economic activity, we expect BI policy to turn growth supportive and are consequently sticking to our forecast for 50 basis points of interest rate cuts.

Contents

Executive Summary
Core Views
Key Risks To Outlook

CHAPTER 1: POLITICAL OUTLOOK

SWOT Analysis
BMI Political Risk Ratings
Domestic Politics
Elections Crib Sheet: Jokowi Ascendant

Indonesians are set to vote in the upcoming legislative and presidential elections in April and July, respectively. The impending elections are particularly crucial as the new administration will assume the task of reinvigorating a slowing economy and rebuilding confidence from both the electorate and foreign investors. Indonesia, which emerged from the Global Financial Crisis relatively unscathed, is now witnessing its slowest growth in almost four years. Its citizens have become increasingly disgruntled following current president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration's failure to keep to his campaign pledges, while investors, both local and foreign alike, have been holding back on investment amid hints of surfacing protectionism.

Table: Political Overview
Long-Term Political Outlook
Outlook Improved, But Uncertainty Lingers

Although Indonesia has returned to relative orderliness since the chaos of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the country faces multiple challenges and threats to its stability that could flare up again if President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's successor proves incompetent or if improved governance fails to take hold. As such, investors will continue to view Indonesia as one of Asia's riskier destinations.

CHAPTER 2: ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

SWOT Analysis
BMI Economic Risk Ratings
Economic Activity
Jokowi Victory May Carry Infrastructure, Mining and Oil & Gas Upside

Current Jakarta governor Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) runaway favourite tag for the presidential elections leads us to believe that it may not be too premature to deliberate Indonesia's economic trajectory under a Jokowi-led administration. While we have yet to

see his policy platform, Jokowi's ability to streamline bureaucratic inefficiencies, improve public finances, strike a balance between pro-business and pro-welfare policies, as well as willingness to take politically unpopular but necessary measures to right economic imbalances could provide some upside potential for the infrastructure, mining and oil and gas sectors.

TABLE: ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Fiscal Policy

Property, Infrastructure Spending To Provide Structural Loan Growth

On the back of a slowing economy and a likely increase in borrowing costs, we expect to see the pace of credit expansion in Indonesia's banking sector start to slow in the quarters ahead. Over the longer term, we believe that the banking sector has considerable potential for growth as the country is still in the early stages of a long-term credit up-cycle and the mortgage market has largely been untapped. Further support may also stem from an improvement in the government's finances, which would in turn allow for greater infrastructure spending, and ultimately stronger loan growth.

TABLE: FISCAL POLICY

Monetary Policy

BI To Maintain Tightening Bias, For Now

Judging from the progressive deceleration in inflation, as well as a continuing fall in import demand, Bank Indonesia's (BI) monetary tightening appears to be exhibiting some measure of efficacy. In the near term, we do not expect BI to reverse its policy stance as it continues to allow policy measures to work their way through the economy. Towards the second half of the year, however, with inflation likely to fall within the BI's target range, coupled with an ongoing slowdown in economic activity, we expect BI policy to turn growth supportive and are consequently sticking to our forecast for 50 basis points of interest rate cuts.

Table: MONETARY POLICY

Exchange Rate Policy

IDR: Set For Further Strength

Table: Currency Forecast

CHAPTER 3: 10-YEAR FORECAST

The Indonesian Economy To 2023

A Bullish Long-Term Growth Story

Indonesia's large domestic demand base and exposure to commodities are two key factors driving our bullish growth outlook for the next decade. That said, government policy reform will be crucial in determining if the country can reach its real growth potential.

Table: Long-Term Macroeconomic Forecasts

CHAPTER 4: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

SWOT Analysis

BMI Business Environment Risk Ratings

Business Environment Outlook

Table: BMI Business And Operation Risk Ratings

Institutions

Table: BMI Legal Framework Rating

Table: Labour Force Quality

Infrastructure

TABLE: ASIA - ANUAL FDI INFLOWS

Table: Trade And Investment Ratings

Market Orientation

TABLE: INDONESIA's TOP EXPORT DESTINATIONS, 2001-2008

Operational Risk

CHAPTER 5: KEY SECTORS

Defence

Table: Defence Expenditure , 2011-2018

Freight Transport

Table: Air Freight, 2011-2018

Table: Rail Freight, 2011-2018

Table: Maritime Freight, 2011-2018

Table: Trade Overview, 2011-2018

Table: Key Trade Indicators, 2011-2018

Other Key Sectors

Table: Oil and Gas Sector Key Indicators

Table: Food and Drink Sector Key Indicators

Table: Infrastructure Sector Key Indicators

Table: Pharma Sector Key Indicators

Table: Telecoms Sector Key Indicators

CHAPTER 6: BMI GLOBAL ASSUMPTIONS

Global Outlook

Chinese Economy Under Pressure

Table: Global Assumptions

Table: Developed States, Real GDP Growth, %

Table: BMI VERSUS BLOMBERG CONSENSUS REAL GDP GROWTH
FORECASTS, %

Table: Emerging Markets, Real GDP Growth, %

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