

Malaysia Business Forecast Report Q1 2015

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Abstracts

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Core Views

The Malaysian economy's strong real GDP growth in Q214 is likely to continue to be supported by strong exports, but we expect consumer spending growth to weaken. In light of strong H114 data, we have upgraded our full-year forecast from the current level of 4.5% to 5.8%.

The proposed changes to Malaysia's fuel subsidy scheme will place upside pressures on inflation, posing short-term problems for the government as it seeks to contain the rising cost of living. However, we believe that the proposed changes will have a positive impact on long-term fiscal discipline by reducing expenditures and increasing government revenue.

In line with our expectations, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) held its Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3.25% during its monetary policy meeting on September 18. We forecast interest rates to remain on hold for the rest of 2014 and through 2015 as BNM focuses on maintaining growth as exports have slowed and inflation should remain manageable.

We continue to forecast the ringgit to appreciate to MYR3.1100/USD by end-2014 and MYR2.9500/USD by end-2015 due to strong GDP growth, benign inflation, and a stronger demand for exports.

The debacle over the new Selangor Chief Minister in Malaysia will have negative effects on the policy making ability of Pakatan Rakyat (PR), which holds the majority in Selangor's State Legislative Assembly, and shows that the coalition lacks unity. Infighting has also distracted the government from dealing with more pressing economic



issues. We believe that this will lead to a deterioration in the business environment and may deter investors from investing in the state.

Major Forecast Changes

We have upgraded our full-year GDP forecast from the current level of 4.5% to 5.8% in the light of strong H114 data. While exports are likely to continue to provide support for growth, we expect consumer spending growth to weaken over the coming quarters.



Contents

Executive Summary Core Views Major Forecast Changes Key Risks To Outlook

CHAPTER 1: POLITICAL OUTLOOK

SWOT Analysis **BMI** Political Risk Index **Domestic Politics** Politicking At Expense Of Economy The debacle over the new Selangor Chief Minister in Malaysia will have negative effects on the policy making ability of Pakatan Rakyat (PR), which holds the majority in Selangor's State Legislative Assembly, and shows that the coalition lacks unity. Infighting has also distracted the government from dealing with more pressing economic issues. We believe that this will lead to a deterioration in the business environment and may deter investors from investing in the state. Table: Political Over view Long-Term Political Outlook Race Relations Still Cloud The Horizon Malaysia's ethnic diversity will continue to influence domestic politics, and the rise of a stronger opposition presents myriad possibilities in the political arena over the longer term.

CHAPTER 2: ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

SWOT Analysis BMI Economic Risk Index Economic Activity Growth Continues To Be Export-Driven The Malaysian economy's strong real GDP growth in Q214 is likely to continue to be supported by strong exports, but we expect consumer spending growth to weaken. In light of strong H114 data, we have upgraded our full-year forecast from the current level of 4.5% to 5.8%. Table: Economic Activity



Revamped Fuel Subsidy Good For Government Coffers

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government as it seeks to contain the rising cost of living. However, we believe that the proposed changes will have a positive impact on

long-term fiscal discipline by reducing expenditures and increasing government revenue.

Table: Fiscal Policy

BNM Holds Rates For Now

In line with our expectations, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) held its Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3.25% during its monetary policy

meeting on September 18. We forecast interest rates to remain on hold for the rest of 2014 and through 2015 as BNM focuses on

maintaining growth as exports have slowed and inflation should remain manageable.

Table: Monetary Policy

Exchange Rate Policy

MYR: The Bull Market Charges On

We continue to forecast the ringgit to appreciate to MYR3.1100/USD by end-2014 and MYR2.9500/USD by end-2015 due to strong

GDP growth, benign inflation, and a stronger demand for exports.

Table: BMI CURENCY FORECAST

Table: Current Account

CHAPTER 3: 10-YEAR FORECAST

The Malaysian Economy to 2023

Productivity Gains To Support 4.0% Real Growth

Owing to strong demographic trends, a continually improving business environment,

and further ASEAN economic integration, we see

Malaysian real GDP seeing a compound annual average growth rate of 4.0% (8.3% in nominal US dollar terms) over the next decade.

While this is slightly below the 4.3% (10.5% in nominal US dollar terms) rate seen over the past decade, this largely reflects lower

growth in the working age population, while labour productivity growth is set to rise. The lofty level of household debt, and uncertainty

regarding the fiscal trajectory are risks, but are not likely to derail the economy's strong prospects.

Table: Long-Term Macroeconomic Forecasts



CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONAL RISK

SWOT Analysis Operational Risk Index Operational Risk Table: Operational Risk Transport Network Table: Asia Transp ort Netw ork Ris ks Economic Openness Table: Asia - Economic Openness Risk Table: Top 5 Products Imported (USDmn), 2007-2013 Table: Top 5 Trade Partners Product Exports (USDmn), 2007-2013

CHAPTER 5: KEY SECTORS

Oil & Gas Table: Headline Forecasts Table: Oil Production Table: Gas Production Table: Gas Production Infrastructure Table: Construction And Infrastructure Industry Data Table: Construction And Infrastructure Industry Data Other Key Sectors Table: Pharma Sector Key Indicators Table: Pharma Sector Key Indicators Table: Food & Drink Sector Key Indicators Table: Autos Sector Key Indicators Table: Defence & Security Sector Key Indicators Table: Telecoms Sector Key Indicators Table: Telecoms Sector Key Indicators

CHAPTER 6: BMI GLOBAL ASSUMPTIONS

Global Outlook Big Emerging Market Revisions Table: Global Assumptions Table: Devel oped States , Real GDP Growt H, % Table: BMI VERSUS BLOO MBERG CONSENSUS REAL GDP GROWTH FORECASTS, %



Table: Emerging Mar kets , Real GDP Growth , %



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