

Brunei Darussalam	
Policy responses	
Containment	<p>The government is actively responding to the risks of the pandemic from spreading further by implementing a range of measures, including strict inbound and outbound travel restrictions and banning all mass gatherings, including weddings and sporting events.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health (MOH) is stepping up efforts to track close contacts of positive cases. On March 22, the Sultan of Brunei announced that the MOH will be expanding its testing capacity, while a new virology laboratory is being built with the hope to increase the country's testing capacity by 10-fold to meet the testing need.</p> <p>Brunei issued iMSafe tracking bracelets on April 30 to all Covid-19 patients currently under home quarantine and those already recovered.</p> <p>On 15 March, the Brunei Darussalam Government barred all citizens and foreign residents from leaving as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>On 16 March, the Ministry of Religious Affairs announced a one-week closure for all mosques in the country, from 17 March until 23 March, and the Friday prayers which coincided with this time were suspended.</p> <p>On May 15, restrictions on businesses were eased by allowing businesses such as driving schools, sports facilities, food courts, stalls and markets to open, with social distancing. Mass gatherings remain suspended.</p> <p>BruHealth mobile app launched on May 15 along with opening of these businesses, which requires all customers to scan QR code. By June 29, more than 405,034 individuals had registered. More than 4,200 business had downloaded the free PremiseScan app, which tracks crowd sizes and movement using the QR codes.</p> <p>Brunei resumed direct flights with Hangzhou, China, on August 4.</p> <p>As of August 17, the government is allowing mass gatherings of up to 200 people. Restrictions on public facilities, mosques, and schools have also been eased.</p> <p>From 6 Oct, those entering the country need to submit negative PCR test result, which will then be valid for 14 days.</p> <p>23 Mar 21. Brunei has joined the global Covax scheme and is expecting to have the COVID-19 vaccine in Q1 2021, having sourced enough supplies to cover 50% of the population.</p> <p>Discussions are on-going with other suppliers. The COVID-19 vaccine will be made free for all Brunei residents, regardless of citizenship status.</p>
Fiscal	<p>On March 21, the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) announced targeted measures centered mainly around tax, utility and social security deductions/deferments to assist hardest-hit households and firms affected by COVID-19, while supporting demand. An interim fiscal package (for six months effective April 1) has been deployed to support SMEs and self-employed groups in sectors such as tourism, hospitality, transport and restaurants. On March 30, the MOFE announced additional financial support measures amounting to an estimated total of BND250 million, effective April 1. Coupled with the earlier fiscal assistance, these</p>

	<p>measures will increase the value of Brunei Darussalam Economic Stimulus Package to a total of BND450 million (or 3.2 percent of GDP).</p> <p>On April 13, Brunei announced a special \$400 monthly allowance for healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, volunteers, hospital cleaners, and security guards.</p> <p>Feb 4, 2021: The fiscal deficit is projected to narrow to 9.1 per cent of GDP in 2021, after widening substantially to 15.1 per cent of GDP in 2020.</p>
Monetary	<p>Provision of working capital at 5 percent interest for wholesale distributors authorized by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MoEA) for a period of 3 months, extendable by 3 months.</p> <p>The Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) has announced several measures, including the waiver of interest on loans for three months and deferred monthly loan instalment repayment by three months, working capital for tourism-related companies at 5 percent and loans to cottage and small industries (microloans at 2 percent interest for agriculture and rural activities and working capital loans at 4 percent interest rate).</p> <p>To facilitate the implementation of the recent monetary policy measures, the RMA further reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) by 200 basis point, to 7 percent, with effect from April 27. Effective May 1, the RMA announced that the interest waiver facility would be extended to non-performing loan accounts for a period of three months (April–June)</p>
Financial	<p>On March 19, the Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam (AMBD), working closely with MOFE as well as the financial industry, announced a six-month interim measures to alleviate the financial burden on sectors hit hard by COVID-19. Effective April 1, (i) businesses in the tourism, hospitality/event management, restaurants/cafes, and air transport sectors (“Affected Sectors”) will be given a six-month deferment of their principal repayments of financing/loans; (ii) the deferment is also extended to importers of food and medical supplies; and (iii) all bank fees and charges (except third party charges) that are related to trade and for payments of transactions in those Affected Sectors will be waived for a period of six months. To encourage social distancing and promote the usage of digital banking, online local interbank transfer fees and charges will be waived for a period of six months for all customers. Banks are also encouraged to review their lending rates in this current environment.</p>
SME measures (last update 22 January 2021)	<p><b>Tax reduction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) announced that SMEs and self-employed persons in the tourism, hotel, transportation, and hotel industries can reduce corporate income taxes for six months from 1 April 2020.</li> <li>• For a period of six months starting from April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Government provides, for targeted sectors such as tourism, hospitality (including hotels and lodging houses), restaurants and cafes, and air and water</li> </ul>

	<p>transportation, (i) 50 per cent tax discount on corporate income tax for the year of assessment 2021 and (ii) 15 per cent discount on water and electricity bills.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Deferral of tax payment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MOFE announced that SMEs and self-employed persons in the above industries can defer payments on Employees Trust Fund and Supplementary Contributory Pension contributions for six months from 1 April 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other fiscal support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MOFE announced that SMEs and self-employed persons in the above sectors can reduce rents and utilities for six months from 1 April 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>Loan support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MOFE announced that affected individuals and self-employed persons in private sectors can convert outstanding credit card balances into loans of not more than three years and are exempted from bank-related fees (except third-party fees).</li> </ul> <p><b>Deferral of loan repayment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MOFE (i) provided a total amount of BND 250 million to support deferred principal or interest repayments and waivers of handling fees and (ii) announced that all sectors can defer principal repayments of financings or loans for six months from April 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other financial support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Monetary Authority of Brunei Darussalam announced that bank fees and charges related to the trading of trade in tourism, hospitality, event management, restaurants, cafes, air transport sectors, food, and medical supplies vendors can be waived for a period of half a year from 1 April 2020.</li> <li>To promote the development of digital services for banks, all customers using local inter-bank transfers online can be waived for transfer fees and charges for a period of half a year from 1 April 2020.</li> <li>The MOFE provided 25 per cent salary subsidies for Bruneian employees in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with less than 100 employees – for a period of three months – since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>All bank and fee charges for deferment and restructuring applications (including restructuring of outstanding balances on credit cards), excluding third party charges, will be waived until 30th December 2020.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>From April 1<sup>st</sup>, and for six months, the Government will be providing</li> </ul>
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<sup>1</sup><https://www.mofe.gov.bn/Shared%20Documents/MEASURES%20UNDERTAKEN%20BY%20THE%20GOVERNMENT%20IN%20HANDLING%20THE%20IMPACT%20OF%20COVID-19%20%20issued%2027.04.2020%20v7.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

	30 per cent discount on rental rates of government buildings for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) according to the targeted sectors such as tourism, hospitality (including hotels and lodging houses), restaurants and cafes, and air and water transportation. <sup>4</sup>
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#### References

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.