



VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW
Brunei Darussalam
2023

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FOREWORD

Alhamdulillah, I am pleased that Brunei Darussalam is able to report its progress in Sustainable Development through the submission of the Second Voluntary National Review at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. At a time of great disruption, it is inspiring that all countries continue progressing with the promise to fulfill the vision of a more sustainable future. Brunei Darussalam will continue its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, fulfilling shared responsibilities to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure global communities enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. In line with our national vision, *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, concerted efforts have continued to progress economic prosperity, improved well-being, and higher quality of life, with sustainability serving as the cornerstone. Building a pathway for sustainable development, however, requires that things continue in a holistic manner, fitting with the needs of our people and, more importantly, future generations.

As Brunei Darussalam reflects on the efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the preparation of the report has provided the drive for more sustainable actions and to deliver more tangible outcomes. At the midpoint of implementing the SDGs, Brunei Darussalam has not been complacent in meeting the global pledge of leaving no one behind. We hope our successes and experiences thus far can influence more positive impacts, accelerate the move to address challenges and inspire more determined actions.

The world has endured many complex challenges, and for the remaining seven years, there are other anticipated challenges and opportunities. What this has taught us, is that there is nothing that cannot be overcome together through resilience and agility. Developmental differences amongst us must be embodied as opportunities to learn, support and move forward together. We must therefore continue to cooperate and innovate, even during challenging circumstances. As such, multilateralism must be upheld and further strengthened to realise the SDGs. Promoting such spirit and solidarity is what Brunei Darussalam hopes to be able to witness at the upcoming SDG Summit in September 2023, reinforcing global commitment to fulfill the needs of the present and future.

**SULTAN HAJI HASSANAL BOLKIAH
OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

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KEY MESSAGES

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with its National Vision, *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, progressing the nation towards its goals of having an educated, highly skilled and accomplished people; a high quality of life; and a dynamic and sustainable economy. The Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) is timely, as a reflection of the SDG journey following global disruptions. Developed through a participative multi-stakeholder

approach, this VNR highlights several developments within the SDGs ecosystem including mainstreaming SDGs with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*; enhancements in institutional arrangements; improvements in evidence-based monitoring and timely reporting of progress. Whole-of-nation partnerships coupled with international cooperation, substantiate the findings of SDGs progress and the identified opportunities to address gaps for the remaining seven years.

National Progress and Challenges

As a country with a high Human Development Index with a value of 0.829¹, Brunei Darussalam continues to strengthen efforts in several dimensions. The nation remains resolute in maintaining several key areas in particular the commitment to the Universal Health Coverage with improvements in health infrastructure, equipment, medicines, and personnel. This has contributed to a low maternal and child mortality rate, a high proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel, and a high percentage of routine vaccination coverage rates. The resilience of the health system was tested by the COVID-19 pandemic but through aggressive action including regular public communications and a strong sense of solidarity, a low death rate with a high recovery rate was achieved.

Economic diversification has made a good stride of progress in stimulating economic growth and more importantly, creating job opportunities. People's livelihood is further improved by significant investment in better infrastructure, improved food and nutrition security as well as full access to basic needs, particularly electricity, water, and sanitation. Free education at all levels and lifelong human capital development remain important drivers to maintaining a prosperous society, among others, with high youth and adult literacy rates; good enrolments rate, and stable gender parity. There are also more innovative efforts, especially in the provision of social protection from poverty and hunger among vulnerable groups.



The Brunei community also continues to prioritise efforts in climate change, addressing biodiversity loss, and maintaining natural ecosystems. Renewable energy is currently being explored, with initiatives to improve energy efficiency and promote sustainable livelihood.

There are, however, areas for improvement. At present, data gaps remain a significant challenge. As such, there is only partial assessment of SDG progress, even though the SDG National Tracker established by UNESCAP has greatly improved data monitoring and reporting. For example, even though there are aggressive climate change actions through the Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change

Policy (BNCCP), more data is needed to effectively monitor outcomes and impacts for Goal 13. There are also other additional compounding factors. For example, whilst there have been improvements in Goal 4 in uplifting the quality of teachers and responding to the needs of special needs students, the education system now has to deal with learning loss due to school closures during the pandemic. Another area of concern is actions needed to support transformations in human consumption behaviours, such as increasing the uptake of recycling and sustainable practices. Strong partnerships are therefore essential to accelerate progress and scale up interventions.

The Way Forward

Brunei Darussalam is confident that the SDGs can be achieved through solidarity and building synergies in efforts with strength and resilience. Brunei Darussalam will continue its efforts to strengthen key areas including investments in human capital; progressing in quality of life which includes governance, social and environmental areas; and accelerating economic diversification to reduce poverty, inequalities and improve social and economic resilience. Ongoing efforts will also be continued through strengthening statistical capacity to better identify vulnerable

populations; develop evidence-based policies; strengthen collaboration with all relevant stakeholders and through deeper policy coherence and implementation. These would be particularly relevant in designing and mobilising behavioural changes needed for a deeper change towards sustainable development. Together with a stronger multilateralism approach to SDG, action to the 2030 Agenda will further transform the future of the planet and its people. Brunei Darussalam will continue its SDG journey with resilience, adaptation, and partnership.

¹ UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2022. Human Development Report 2021-22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World. New York.







PART I

**BRUNEI
DARUSSALAM'S**

*Policy-Enabling
Environment*



INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the world committed itself to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting the world on a sustainable path for people, planet, peace, partnership and prosperity. The 2030 Agenda encompasses aspects of human and planetary well-being, and promises the prospect of global stability, prosperity, and harmony. Brunei Darussalam's endorsement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly with the other Member States marked our commitment to the shared vision to end poverty, inequality and injustice, and to tackle climate change by 2030.

In 2020, Brunei Darussalam shared its first VNR Report at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development with a message from His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam announcing the National efforts in accomplishing the SDGs, building upon its early achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Brunei Darussalam also reaffirmed its commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, in line with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Following Brunei Darussalam's submission of VNR Report at the 2020 United Nations High-Level Political Forum, Brunei Darussalam took strategic steps to strengthen its support of the global ambition for the SDGs. By the consent of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the Prime Minister's Office assumed the role of the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs (SNCC) to further strengthen the coordination efforts especially in catalysing the integration of the 2030 Agenda with the country's National Vision - *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. As a result, there has been much progress of shared efforts in many areas within the SDGs despite the disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic. Ministries, agencies, and civil society partners have all continued working together to ensure that the country can reach the targets set out in the global development framework. Brunei Darussalam is determined to further step up whole-of-nation efforts to provide a greater impetus to Brunei Darussalam's transformative agenda for global sustainability.

Brunei Darussalam's Second VNR provides us a reminder of our continuing journey towards attaining the goals and targets of the SDGs agenda and highlights the challenges we need to address, to keep us on the path of progress. This will no doubt help us to stay on our trajectory of success towards a more sustainable future.

Brunei Darussalam's Approach to SDGs

Brunei Darussalam aligns SDG implementation to the National Vision, *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. *Wawasan Brunei 2035* aspires that by 2035, Brunei Darussalam will be recognised for its educated, highly skilled and accomplished people; high quality of life; and dynamic and sustainable economy. The country's development strategies and policies are guided by the Vision, by which it also incorporates Sustainable Development concepts. The alignment and harmonisation of both the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and SDGs ensure that the nation's efforts to

advance both sustainable development and the national development agenda go hand-in-hand. The *Wawasan Brunei 2035* operationalises efforts through three blueprints, namely, *Manpower Blueprint*, *Social Blueprint*, and *Economic Blueprint*. These blueprints outline aspirations the country is aiming for and serve as a guidance for line ministries and relevant agencies in developing current and future policies and projects in transforming Brunei Darussalam into a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable nation.



Figure 1 Alignment between Wawasan Brunei 2035 and SDGs

Strengthening the SDG Agenda

Brunei Darussalam’s first VNR provided a picture of where the nation stands in terms of implementing the SDGs. The picture was initial but necessary, as Brunei Darussalam has just begun to embark on a more data-driven SDG journey. The first VNR, therefore, served as an important starting point for future work. Findings from the first VNR indicated good progress in SDG implementation with notable progress in Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and 14 (Life below Water), and more attention was identified for Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and Goal 13 (Climate Change).

The initial assessment allowed space to reflect and consider ways to accelerate SDG progress. This has been instrumental in bringing positive changes and significant changes to SDG implementation for Brunei Darussalam, in particular, strengthening coordination mechanisms, partnering with key stakeholders, and using data to monitor and report on progress.

The findings from the first VNR served as the foundation for many transformative actions, which focused on addressing several key issues, such as:

- Issues and challenges that need to be addressed
- Institutional mechanisms within government and with stakeholders that need to be strengthened
- Lessons learnt from VNRs and their translation into action
- Communication and awareness-raising strategies to include stakeholders
- Best practices in data and indicator monitoring, progress assessment and the general reporting of progress for the SDGs.

SDG Coordination

An effective and strong institutional mechanism is vital to drive the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The overall management and coordination of the SDGs, including the monitoring and reporting of the SDGs progress is the responsibility of the Prime Minister’s Office.

A re-strategisation of efforts occurred after the first VNR that shifted the SNCC, established in 2016 at the Ministry of Finance and Economy, to the Prime Minister’s Office in 2020. This move ensures better alignment between the SDGs and the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and allows harmonisation of efforts and progress from various stakeholders.

The SNCC is supported by the Office for the National Vision, *Pejabat Wawasan Brunei*, at the Prime Minister's Office. It is a multi-stakeholder committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary (*Wawasan*) at the Prime Minister's Office with members comprising senior officials from various Ministries and agencies, namely the Prime Minister's Office (PMO); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE); Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); Ministry of Education (MOE); Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT); Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA); Ministry of Development (MOD); Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS); Ministry of Health (MOH); Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC); Employees Trust Fund (TAP); Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB); and Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry (AITI).

The SNCC spearheads the monitoring, and reporting of the implementation of the SDG and the terms of reference include coordinating efforts, overseeing, monitoring and reporting progress, as well as being involved in communicating the SDGs.

Under the SNCC, several key SDG projects have been implemented, notably, the publication of Annual SDG reports; SDG Website; SDG Talks; National Workshops; Strengthen National SDG indicators and monitoring; Strengthen partnerships with the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); and Participation in regional and international meetings. The SNCC is also the main body preparing the VNR. Despite the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 measures, the SNCC has been actively advancing its action plans to address any gaps identified. The committee convened accordingly as scheduled, and stakeholder engagements maintained in order to ensure the pace of implementation stayed on course.

SDG Monitoring and Evaluation

Brunei Darussalam has placed high importance on strengthening the SDGs implementation by narrowing data gaps to strengthen data-driven and inclusive decision-making. A sub-committee of the SNCC has been set up to work closely with the SNCC Secretariat and the Department of Statistics (DOS), Ministry of Finance and Economy as the National Statistics Office (NSO). The committee established in 2021, known as the SDG Technical Working Group (TWG), addresses data and statistical matters related to National SDG indicators within the Brunei

Darussalam National SDG framework. It also supports the compilation, dissemination, and communication of SDG indicators. The TWG undertook the imperative task of strengthening the reporting of the Brunei Darussalam's SDG indicators to better assess the nation's progress and support evidence-based decision-making to ensure that no one is left behind. The process involved providing a platform for collaboration between line ministries and key agencies facilitated by NSO.

Tracking SDG Data and Progress

Now more than ever, there is an increasing need for high-quality, trusted data from strong national statistical systems to inform evidence-based decision-making and measure the progress towards achieving sustainable development. For Brunei Darussalam, there has been a more active shift in two main areas. Firstly, a review of all the SDG indicators on the global framework of the SDGs. This review aims at identifying and confirming global SDG indicators and national SDG indicator sets.

Secondly, the implementation of the National SDG Tracker tool, with close collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). This tool has helped to measure progress towards the attainment of the SDGs. As a result, Brunei Darussalam has improved the availability of internationally comparable data on the SDGs and can better comprehend the progress made in the SDGs.

Communicating the SDGs

An SDG Communication Plan was developed to translate the commitment to ensure that all sectors of society can contribute to the implementation of SDGs by creating awareness and gaining understanding and knowledge of the SDGs. A national awareness campaign on SDGs began with the launching of SDG Brunei Instagram (@sdg_brunei) as part of the country's digital

outreach in encouraging active participation from all levels into the global agenda. In addition to talks and outreach activities, the SNCC has recognised an opportunity to create a centralised information hub on the national implementation of SDGs through the national SDG website accessible at www.sdgbornei.gov.bn

Partnership and Cooperation

Brunei Darussalam values building effective partnerships locally, regionally, and internationally to promote greater collaboration in the implementation of the SDGs. The SNCC supports this through a strategic national initiative named SDG Partners by connecting with multi-stakeholders in the sustainable agenda and establishing ties with key agencies and organisations. SDG partners build networks with various stakeholders encompassing NGOs, civil society organisations, financial institutions, academic institutions, as well as the private sector to promote integrated efforts to advance the SDGs in a whole-of-society approach. Although new, it adds value to the collaboration efforts with non-government entities; creating and amplifying awareness of sustainability to shift people's mindset, one of the most difficult challenges to overcome. More helping hands can greatly improve government policies or programmes, extending the coverage of crucial support for people in need.

Local collaboration is equally important as our international cooperation. Brunei Darussalam ensures continuous international presence through its participation in various regional and international meetings related to Sustainable Development, including the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, ASEAN Forum on SDG with National Development Planning Agencies, ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue in Accelerating Actions to Achieve the SDGs, and High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Each participation adds value in supporting the country to implement the SDGs as part of the global community.

In addition to the knowledge gained and exchanged through these platforms, a network of potential partners has also widened. Brunei Darussalam joined the Group of Friends of China's Global Development Initiative in 2022 as a pathway for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 agenda. In the near future, Brunei Darussalam anticipates potential mutual gains in three areas: strengthening policy dialogue, sharing best practices, and promoting practical cooperation. Collective action based on shared principles and evidence-led is imperative to achieving the 2030 Agenda. It is the spirit of multilateralism that has led Brunei Darussalam in this global effort to drive sustainable development. The sharing of experiences from respective UN agencies has provided valuable insights and benefited the nation in many ways, particularly in ensuring that the nation becomes more resilient and adaptable to future external changes.

Brunei Darussalam has also benefited from technical assistance and capacity development. Partnerships such as this provide new knowledge and have opened many possibilities. The SNCC Secretariat works closely with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office for Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam, who provide valuable support, and guidance, in particular supporting efforts to address SDGs implementation gaps. The Secretariat also works closely with UNESCAP on strengthening data and monitoring through SDG Tracker, and more recently, the Department of Energy, Prime Minister's Office has also embarked on technical assistance with UNESCAP that will develop a Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) roadmap.

Brunei Darussalam is also exploring cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to guide the formulation of a National Climate Change adaptation plan. Brunei Darussalam also collaborates with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In 2022, for example, an introductory workshop was jointly organised with the theme, Role of UNDP and Experiences in Localising the SDGs, aiming at raising awareness of SDGs and sharing best practices. Despite being held virtually at the height of the pandemic, the webinar has garnered a wide audience ranging from the government sector, private sector, NGOs, and academia.

Methodology of Review / The VNR process

A purposeful, multi-sectoral approach with the intention of being inclusive and collaborative was the driving principle behind the VNR process. Brunei Darussalam was driven to produce a more comprehensive data-driven reporting on progress,

with greater stakeholder engagement and ownership. The main institution charged with preparing the VNR is the PMO. SNCC spearheaded the preparation of the 2023 VNR through six phases as shown at *Figure 2*.

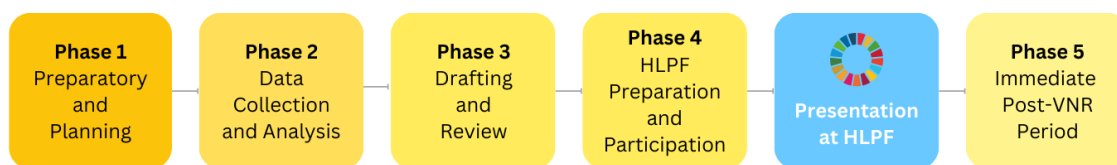


Figure 2 Phases of VNR Preparation for Brunei Darussalam

Preparations for the VNR began immediately with a stocktake for the first VNR and the deployment of the work done by the SDG TWG and the SDG Tracker. As an outcome, the availability of internationally comparable data for national SDG monitoring has advanced. At this point, it remains a challenge to properly gauge the pace of progress towards the realisation of the 2030 Agenda due to the significant data gaps, particularly in terms of timeliness, utilisation, and level of disaggregation. The COVID-19 pandemic also posed challenges in meeting data demands, particularly data from the ground. On the other hand, it also became an opportunity to experiment with innovative data-gathering techniques, explore new data sources, and modernise ICT infrastructures. Moving forward, there were many lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has helped accelerate innovation in national statistical systems in a more rigorous and systematic manner.

The VNR process also valued the importance of stakeholder engagement. The SDGs consist of ambitious targets that cover multiple and interdependent sectors and, therefore, necessitate the participation of all segments of society. The VNR process included reviewing and analysing relevant policies and progress made in relation to the 17 Goals through the lens of stakeholders to determine contributions and identify areas of opportunities for accelerating SDG implementation.

A National Workshop on Second VNR was held to mark the beginning of national consultation for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Brunei Darussalam. Apart from raising awareness and understanding of SDGs, the workshop serves as a platform for establishing cross-sectoral alliances, strengthening partnerships, and engaging with diverse stakeholders about the progress, challenges, and possible solutions, as well as future outlook.

The open dialogue format enabled honest conversations and in-depth discussions on critical themes, providing a true reflection of the current progress of SDGs in Brunei Darussalam; challenging participants to develop robust solutions; and creating a sense of urgency to mobilise resources in accelerating SDG achievement in a whole-of-nation approach. A similar workshop was also held with youths in collaboration with the Brunei Youth Council and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to determine the youth's voice in SDGs. The national consultation ended with a National Workshop held to report back key findings and discuss a future action plan to accelerate SDG implementation. The engagement sessions with relevant stakeholders, key experts, and resource persons have continued to collect up-to-date data and information on SDGs progress, develop a common understanding, and generate feedback. Inputs received through these consultations were subsequently documented to be part of the final 2023 VNR report.

Building on Brunei Darussalam's first VNR in 2020, the second VNR hopes to present a more comprehensive and in-depth look into the efforts of Brunei Darussalam's progress, achievements, and challenges. The 2023 VNR also aims to document the impacts of COVID-19 on SDGs advancement and highlights post-pandemic recovery actions to build back better as part of regaining back and accelerating the 2030 Agenda. In maintaining the momentum and reemphasising commitment to SDGs within the country, the 2023 VNR also build upon Brunei Darussalam's SDGs Annual Report for 2021 and 2022. These reports were produced on an annual basis to raise awareness of the efforts undertaken at the national level and encourage the participation of the whole society in sustainable development.

Several key features of the VNR are as follow:

- Reporting on all 17 SDGs. Progress on all 17 SDGs is provided, including information on government policies, frameworks, international cooperation, and statistics that would address the progress, key challenges, and best practices across all Goals.
- A focus on National Projects, Initiatives, and Action. The Review focuses on how SDGs are achieved via the whole-of-nation approach. There are also alignments with National Goals and Strategic Objectives according to the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and other National Development Projects. Both the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and the National Projects are in line with SDG commitments. Involving NGOs, the community, and the private sector in SDG implementation is one of the strategic priorities of Brunei Darussalam's approach to sustainable development.
- Showcasing best practices. This VNR pays special attention to showcasing best practices from across the multiple stakeholders in Brunei Darussalam that are making efforts to support the SDG Agenda.
- International cooperation showcased. Other than data and progress updates on what has been done in Brunei Darussalam, the VNR highlights some examples of the work done with the international community.





PART II

**PROGRESS
TOWARDS**

Goals and Targets



BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S SDG PROGRESS

This assessment of the progress made by Brunei Darussalam on the SDGs and targets is based on the initiative and activities conducted by the SNCC Secretariat in partnership with the UNESCAP. An overview of SDG progress in Brunei Darussalam is provided, drawing attention to issues that need to be prioritised in order to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SDG data availability in Brunei Darussalam and data gaps for monitoring the SDGs are also discussed.

To evaluate SDG progress in relation to nationally established target values, analyses use national and global data on SDG indicators relevant to Brunei Darussalam. The UNESCAP methodology was applied to the progress assessment which comprises several key

steps, which began with the selection of indicators, where indicators included in the exercise were jointly selected by the SNCC and NSO – DOS, in consultation with UNESCAP. Following this, confirmation of target values was also carried out. These target values were drawn from targets in the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, official national documents such as masterplans, blueprints or strategic plans, SDG benchmarks, and Regional / International benchmarks.

The progress assessment was carried out based on UNESCAP's Current Status Index, which is a measurement of progress in relation to a baseline and a target value, which aims to answer two main questions relating to how much progress has been made and the comparison of current progress to the 2030 target.

Overview

The National Progress Assessment, as shown in *Figure 3*, indicated that Brunei Darussalam has made considerable advances in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, although data gaps remain for almost half of the 17 SDGs. Data gaps and challenges are considerable in some areas, and actions have been taken in cooperation with line Ministries and Agencies and the NSO – DOS. These include data audits to enhance the accuracy and quality of the data, active monitoring of the timeliness of reporting, and efforts in disaggregation. As much as achievable, Brunei Darussalam aspired that the VNR and monitoring of the SDG progress be data-driven and evidence-based. The SDG tracker enabled a more accurate assessment of SDG progress to be made. Additionally, it has given Brunei Darussalam the opportunity to observe a snapshot of progress within the Goals and towards the targets, recognising achievements and identifying those that remain to be achieved or are regressing.

Since 2015, Brunei Darussalam has made substantial progress on Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). Progress for Goal 7 has been driven by steady performance in access to electricity, reliance on clean energy and energy intensity. For Goal 9, indicators

related to manufacturing value-added, employment in the manufacturing sector, and carbon dioxide emissions per unit of manufacturing value-added have performed well. On the other hand, freight transported by air and container port traffic has decreased, especially in recent years, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other goals have shown good progress. Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), for example, has shown a fall in the unemployment rate. However, efforts need to be further targeted towards reducing the share of youth not in education, employment, or training. Goal 4 (Quality Education) has also been making good progress with improvements in the quality of teachers and a consistent provision of access to education and learning infrastructure. There are, however, some identified gaps in youth and adults with information and communication technologies (ICT) skills. Measures have been taken to address this, which include ensuring a precise assessment of this indicator.

Although progress on Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action) are also significant, fewer than one-third of the required indicators have been used in this analysis. More data is required to provide a more realistic picture of progress for these goals.

Brunei Darussalam also urgently needs to address the regressing trends for Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Analysis indicates more action is needed in key areas for example there is a decrease in the national recycling rate from 25.20 per cent in 2015 to 8.72 per cent in 2021.

More efforts are currently in progress to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of Brunei Darussalam’s economic sectors. Looking at the same period, fossil fuel subsidies reached a record high at 2.21 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

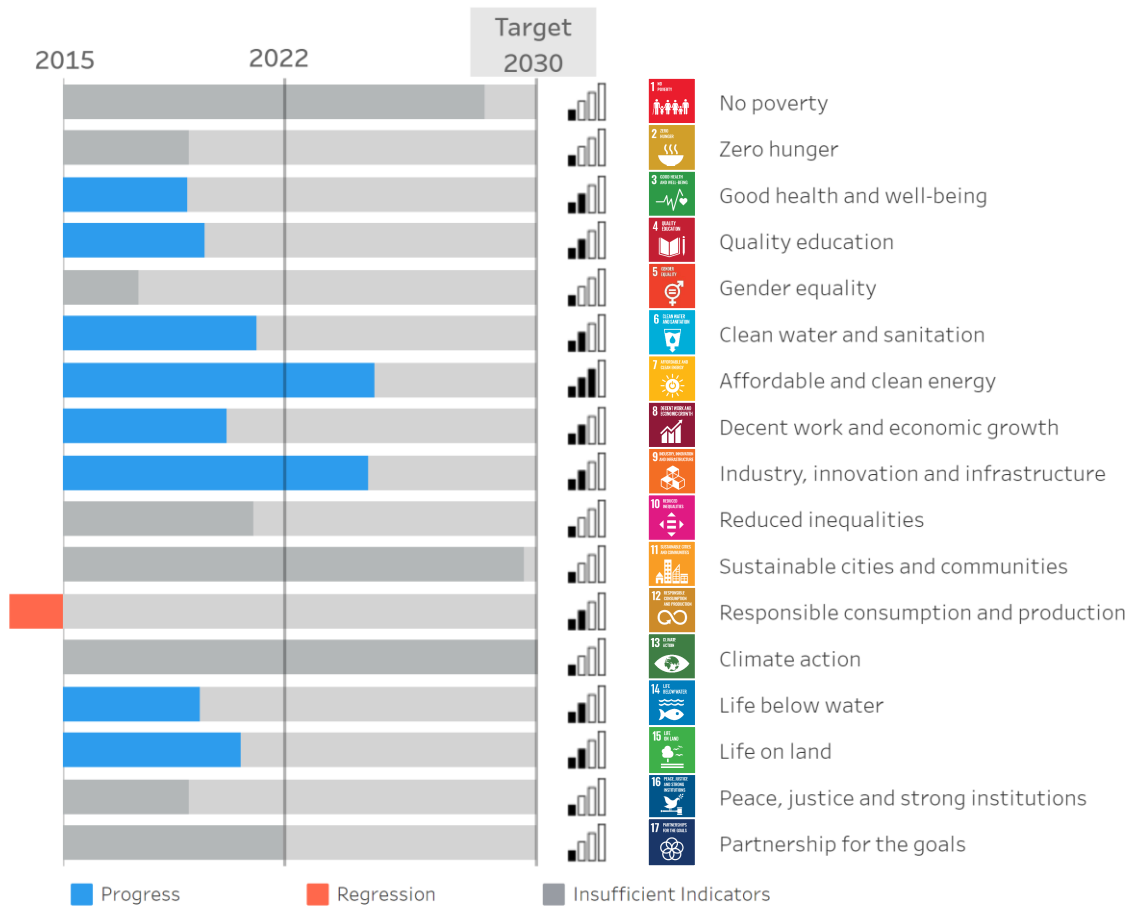


Figure 3 Snapshot of SDG progress in Brunei Darussalam, 2022

There is an urgent need to address and act on the data gaps for almost 60 per cent of data which cannot be measured, as marked in grey. In terms of health and nutrition, prompt action is needed to address all forms of malnutrition, eradicate communicable diseases, reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases, reduce child marriages, and promote mental health. Efforts on education need to be targeted towards accessibility of technical and vocational education and training, improving skills for employment, especially for youth, and advancing teacher training.

In addition, relevant energy policies are required to improve energy efficiency and review fossil fuel subsidies to encourage efficient consumption. In line with the aim to build a dynamic and sustainable economy for *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, the country will need to reverse the negative trends in infrastructure development, waste generation, sustainable tourism, and sustainable use of marine resources. Initiatives to eliminate human trafficking, promote justice for all, and ensure the representation of different groups in decision-making are required to further promote Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Further information can be accessed at the SDG website at www.sdgbornei.gov.bn.

Data Availability

Based on the Global SDG Database², SDG data availability in Brunei Darussalam has shown good improvements, with an increase from 68 sufficient indicators in 2019 to 101 sufficient indicators in 2022, as illustrated in *Figure 4*. Despite these improvements, Brunei Darussalam still lags behind the average SDG data availability in the South-East Asia subregion, as shown in *Figure 5*. The Figure also shows that Brunei Darussalam has 115 indicators with no data available. There are 50 per cent or more indicators for at least half of the 17 SDGs that lack data.

The Goals with greater monitoring challenges due to low data availability include Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 14 (Life Below Water), Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Brunei Darussalam will continue to work on addressing data availability and is committed to ensure that progress remains on a good trajectory.

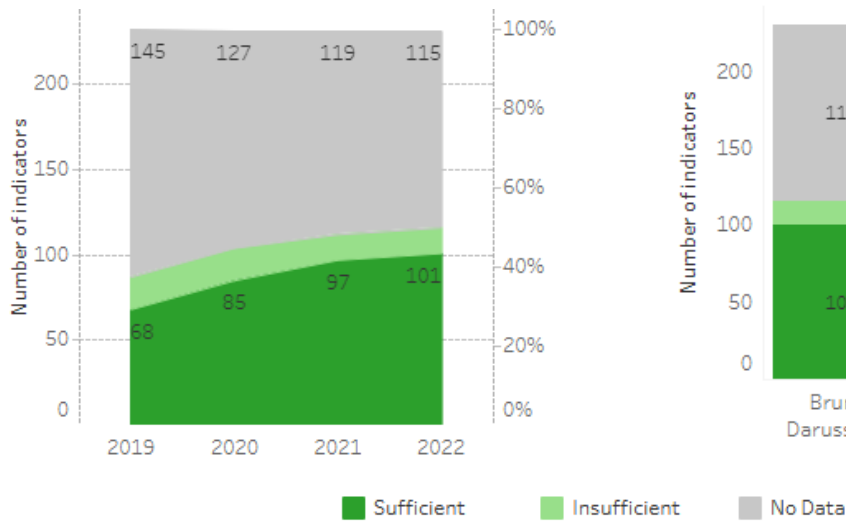


Figure 4 SDG Data Availability in Brunei Darussalam (2019-2022) based on ESCAP, Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway: <https://data.unescap.org/data-analysis/sdg-data-availability>

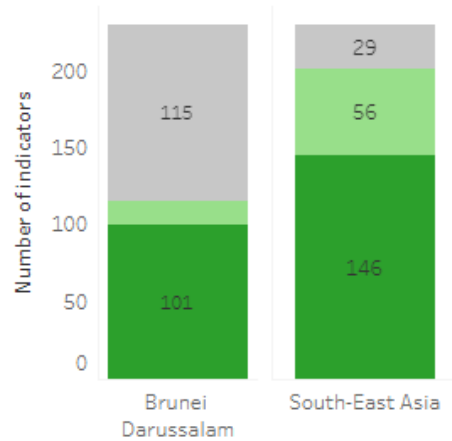


Figure 5 Brunei Darussalam vs. Subregional data availability in 2022

² DESA, Global SDG Database: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1

End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Ensuring the welfare of Brunei Darussalam's population has always been embedded in the Government's policies and actions. This includes addressing poverty in all its forms. High ambition continues to drive all stakeholders to be in coordination to ensure the needed resources are mobilised effectively and efficiently.

The COVID-19 pandemic inevitably caused some challenges in the delivery of sustaining social welfare. As a response, the Government adopted

measures to ensure that people's welfare is continuously being protected.

Brunei Darussalam recognises that although the data on Goal 1 still needs to be strengthened, efforts are continuing to ensure that a more robust assessment of progress in Goal 1 can occur. Currently, there is reported progress in indicator 1.4.1, where the proportion of the population with access to basic water and sanitation services remains high through efforts from all parties.

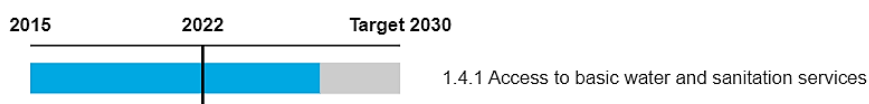


Figure 6 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 1

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Centralised Welfare Systems

The Government remains largely responsible for the social protection of the people of Brunei Darussalam through pensions, health care, education, housing, allowances, and subsidies. Specifically, MCYS is the main agency that has been entrusted with tackling issues of poverty. The Special Committee on Poverty Issues, under the National Council on Social Issues, has continued to increase its efforts in implementing the Poverty Eradication Action Plan to support low-income and vulnerable families and individuals, especially dependent children, and break the cycle of poverty. This has been instrumental to alleviate poverty in the nation whilst empowering the people from falling into the poverty trap, which is guided by the Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication 2020-2024. Steps are also undertaken to further strengthen the overall social protection in Brunei Darussalam through the introduction of the Social Blueprint.

To improve the efficiency of the application and distribution of financial assistance, an integrated and digitalised National Welfare System (*Sistem Kebajikan Negara* or SKN) was introduced in 2020, which centralises welfare schemes managed by relevant agencies. The system has significantly improved information sharing and enhanced the effectiveness of the country's welfare programmes, in particular for those who wish to apply for the Monthly Welfare Assistance (BKB) scheme under the Community Development Department (JAPEM) or Brunei Darussalam Islamic Religious Council (MUIB). In 2022, the SKN was further enhanced with the integration of the Annual School Needs Assistance which was previously managed by MOE, allowing for the provision of school coupons for low-income families. Plans are underway to integrate the processes for monthly old age pension schemes and disability allowances into the SKN.

Amongst some of the system's features is the ability to provide a profile of applicants' demographics and their backgrounds, including family members and the types of assistance needed. SKN will be able to produce a map of welfare recipients for appropriate analysis and intervention, including addressing unemployment issues and providing opportunities for recipients to secure employment and gain skills that help them to become self-sufficient. It provides a much-needed platform to align and allocate assistance for underprivileged and vulnerable groups, allowing for the streamlining of inter-ministerial processes and, more importantly, for effective assessment and validation.

As SKN is a relatively new system, its analytical capability continues to be expanded. Expanding data analytics is explored through wide-ranging fields in order to produce accurate and reliable information to tailor policies and targeted interventions to ensure no one is left behind. SKN was also used during the COVID-19 pandemic to manage the processing of the government's COVID-19 stimulus measures, which included the provision of short-term financial assistance for workers in sectors affected by the pandemic, including those from the private sector. In 2023, SKN integrated applications for in-kind educational assistance from MOE.

Empowerment of People in Need

Financial welfare is seen as a means of supporting people in need, ensuring that there are sustainable benefits to make positive changes in taking care of their life, reducing their reliance on government support as a means of living, and sustaining fiscal capacities. The government strives to nurture the necessary skills for entrepreneurship, self-development, and a positive mindset. This is highlighted in the revised National Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication 2020-2024. The National Plan aims to enhance the efficacy of the existing empowerment programmes with better monitoring and result-oriented mechanism. It covers three focus areas, namely i) Capacity, Access and Opportunities to Generate Income through strategies on employment, entrepreneurship and skills training; ii) Capacity and Access to Education through strategies on education and mindset change; and iii) Policies, Legislation and Infrastructure through strategies on policy,

legislation and guidelines, finance, housing, transportation and childcare support.

Efforts to empower the community to improve their livelihood through programmes and interventions continue, where empowerment programme were conducted virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other than the empowerment programme, the Government also supported the welfare recipients as well as their dependents through education as a means to break the poverty cycle. The Department of Islamic Studies under MORA provides the Rif'ah Scholarship Scheme as one of the empowerment efforts to provide opportunities and scholarship assistance for underprivileged students to pursue higher education locally or abroad based on the set criteria and conditions. The scheme also acts as an initiative to encourage the underprivileged to have a growth mindset that constantly strives to improve their standard of living.

Housing

Brunei Darussalam believes that an important aspect of life is access to affordable and quality housing. Since the mid-1970s, the Government has supported an ongoing housing programme through the National Development Plan to encourage home ownership. National housing schemes include the landless citizen's scheme and the resettlement scheme, both administered by the Housing Development Department under MOD and funded by the development projects of the National Development Plan. Low-cost housings on state land with infrastructure are also allocated to low-income citizens to ensure the underprivileged continue to

enjoy a basic standard of living. Additional assistance is provided for families within the lower income bracket who need shelter, including special projects as part of collaboration between the Government such as PMO, MORA, MOD and MOHA and private sectors, known as *Projek Pembinaan Rumah Bantuan Golongan Daif, Fakir dan Miskin*; Temporary housing for those in immediate need and for the underprivileged under MCYS and Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Housing Scheme. Current efforts include working towards streamlining processes and creating clear guidelines to expedite housing assistance within ministries.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are several challenges associated with poverty and its eradication. Brunei Darussalam has set ambitious targets which require concerted and proactive actions from all parties. More targeted policies are required to ensure that those who require assistance, including marginalised segments of society who are at risk, are being catered for. Furthermore, there is a need for focused effort in areas which support able-bodied welfare recipients to enter the workforce such as increased focus on reskilling and upskilling programmes. This helps resolve the issues surrounding mindset through self-empowerment. Moreover, it is also important for concerted efforts to be made towards ensuring that the people of Brunei Darussalam have equitable access to meaningful employment and skills development.

At present, the Government provides free welfare, health care, and education services. A shift in focus, however, is required, particularly the financial and fiscal sustainability of such existing schemes. In the case of social pensions and social assistance, for example, effective delivery of benefits and their fiscal sustainability remain important issues. Future trends could also potentially disrupt the effectiveness of the government's intervention, for example rise in ageing population.

The Government continues to explore measures and policy that adds more resilience to the system. There are several potential efforts that could provide more support in sustaining efforts towards poverty alleviation and breaking any impending poverty cycle. Firstly, the government is cognizant of the significant role of the wider society, including NGOs and youth, in eradicating extreme poverty. Such a sense of responsibility and community spirit must be continued to be nurtured. This can be achieved by fostering community cohesion and

participation towards eradicating poverty through community service and volunteerism. Young people in this area need to be fully supported in terms of building their capacity to deliver their community service. To capture this effort accurately, there needs to be an integrated mechanism or centralised data system for capturing and monitoring these efforts which will aid in analysis and assessment of impact of youth-led programmes.

Secondly, there is room for improvement to further develop the capacity and capability to fully utilise SKN and, from there, incorporate innovations within the social welfare system. Big data has a future prospect for driving greater partnership between the government and non-government stakeholders in organising interventions and empowerment programmes for specific vulnerable communities.

Thirdly, regional cooperation is recognised as another effective tool in alleviating poverty. Through ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE), the ASEAN Master Plan on Rural Development, and the implementation of the ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication 2021-2025 adopted at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits in November 2022 was found to be beneficial for the nation in learning best practices and lessons learnt from neighbouring countries' policies and programmes particularly that shares similar kind of experience and challenges in eradicating extreme poverty. The Plans contribute to ASEAN's ongoing efforts in alleviating poverty and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations to achieve inclusive and sustainable development, in line with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FEATURE 1

Actions to Break Poverty Cycle

There are numerous NGOs in the country that are focused on providing support to underprivileged communities and help break the poverty cycle, such as:

Big BWN Project (Big BWN)

Established in 2015, Big BWN aims to create economic opportunities by empowering the local community, youth, entrepreneurs, and women with its many national initiatives and campaigns. Over the years, Big BWN has implemented over 180 impact-driven community campaigns nationwide and regionally, from environmental awareness projects to supporting local small businesses and women entrepreneurs. To date, Big BWN has trained and empowered more than 100 youths from various fields under its human capacity development programme.

Big BWN Project is the recipient of several notable awards:

- 2020 National Youth Excellent Project Award by His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam
- 2021 Commonwealth Points of Light Award by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
- Inclusive Business Award 2021 by the ASEAN Business Awards
- 2022 ASEAN Youth Volunteer Organisation Award by the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Forum

An example of their projects is the Kg Bolkiah Community Development Centre, where programmes are run to boost the socio-economic livelihood of the people within the community. As of 2023, there are 30 successful women who owned small businesses from within the community, including 80 members of the Bolkiah Ladies Club. Big BWN Entrepreneurship Training Programmes have provided training on different topics to develop capacity towards building entrepreneurial skills and enhancing capability to improve socio-economic stability.

Majlis Kesejahteraan Masyarakat (MKM) or Council on Social Brunei Darussalam

Established in 2009, MKM's main objective is to highlight and further address social welfare issues in improving the overall social well-being of the underprivileged members. MKM's projects focused on providing continuous support to those with financial problems so that they can be lifted out of the cycle of poverty, including emphasising education for the children and self-empowerment. Their work concentrated in Brunei Darussalam, but they have also aided the underprivileged in other countries such as Malaysia (Limbang and Miri), Indonesia (Surabaya), and Bangladesh.

An example of their projects is their Self-Empowerment Projects, introduced to help selected underprivileged families to be lifted out of poverty, MKM uses a combination of the concept of charity and self-empowerment through entrepreneurship, education, and employment. This includes aiding towards the setting up of businesses, such as organising short courses related to businesses and mindset and supporting the purchase of equipment.

Society for Community Outreach & Training (SCOT)

Established in 2011, SCOT aims to be a catalyst for sustainable poverty alleviation in Brunei Darussalam. SCOT acts as a bridge for coming up with more sustaining ways and strategies to help the underprivileged by providing them with assistance in the form of resources, basic skills, and support to help them move out of the vicious cycle of poverty through ongoing sustainable projects.

An example of their projects is their work with youths through Youth Against Poverty. The Youth Against Poverty workshop was first introduced in August 2016, and it aims to stimulate interest and knowledge of the youth on the issue of poverty in the country. Activities include a Learning Journey (community visits) to allow participants to understand the living condition and situation of the underprivileged; and Focus Group Discussions on project ideas to support the underprivileged.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2

End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Food security remains an important agenda and a major concern for Brunei Darussalam, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more crucial. As the country’s food sources are largely dependent on imports, at the rate of around 70 per cent in 2022, Brunei Darussalam continues to ensure a stable food availability through sustainable agriculture production as well as ensuring an adequate supply of safe and nutritious food.

Brunei Darussalam is committed to further strengthening the food system by accelerating the production growth of the agriculture and fisheries sectors, promoting both domestic and foreign direct investments, and increasing productivity through the use of technology to meet domestic demand and for exports.

Collective efforts need to be accelerated to ensure more equitable, sustainable, and resilient food systems to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, at all levels.

Data availability for Goal 2 is limited to provide a complete picture. There is early indication of improvement in nutritional outcomes. However, Brunei Darussalam is currently facing the unhealthy patterns of a rise in Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). On promoting sustainable agriculture, Brunei Darussalam is on track to enhance productivity of agricultural producers, especially in rice production. Brunei Darussalam also has stable consumer food price index to lower down the risk of food insecurity, especially for low-income households.

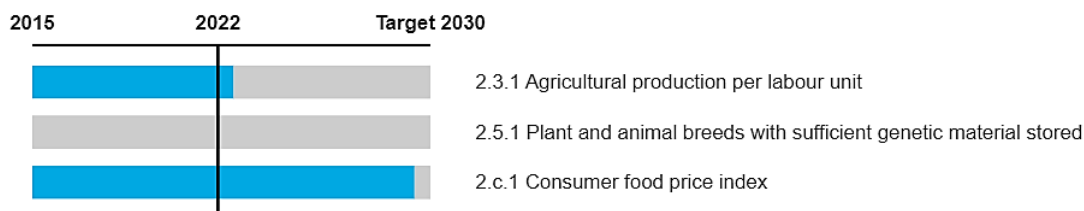


Figure 7 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 2

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Food Security

MPRT strives to increase food supply and strengthen value chain models to achieve self-sufficiency and food security. Food availability has been stable and undernourishment remains low. Key projects have helped to ensure increased production from agriculture, fisheries and livestock, as well as achieving the country’s self-sufficiency targets for a number of commodities.

Attaining self-sufficiency in rice production remains a national priority, as rice is the staple food for Brunei Darussalam. The development and growth in agriculture and livestock industries have been further supported through funding to explore key activities such as the use of innovative technology and modern techniques to boost productivity, and opening of new industrial sites.

Greater efforts continue to be invested in increasing the local production by employing hybrid and high yielding varieties, adopting modern farming and dual seasons cropping practices, encouraging domestic entrepreneurship, including among the youth, as well as introducing commercial-based rice production at a larger scale.

One of the factors contributing to the growth in paddy production is the increase in the cultivation area of high yielding hybrid varieties i.e. Sembada 188, and it is anticipated that the paddy production will continue to rise in the near future as more irrigated rice production areas shift towards planting these high yielding varieties.

PaddyCo Sdn. Bhd has successfully expanded the area cultivated with rice at the Kandol Agriculture Development Area from 8.23 hectares in 2019 to 68.23 hectares on July 2022 and will be expanded further up to 173.23 hectares in 2023. The Kandol Agriculture Development Area can potentially further contribute approximately 5.7 per cent towards the country’s rice self-sufficiency rate.

Other joint-venture projects and programmes to ensure sustainability in developing the agriculture and fisheries sectors include the management of hatching and breeding projects for rostris blue shrimps; and development of a breeding site for fry (fingerlings) using the Recirculating Aquaculture System technology and a fish breeding site (sea juveniles).

To further increase the quantity and quality of domestic rice production as well as regulate domestic rice prices to consumers, other initiatives include the Buy-Back Paddy Scheme, Milling Service Fees and for the purchase of hybrid rice seeds to be distributed to the local rice farmers. With these initiatives, dependencies on imported goods of agricultural-based food products will be minimised, and local business opportunities in agricultural sector will also be promoted.

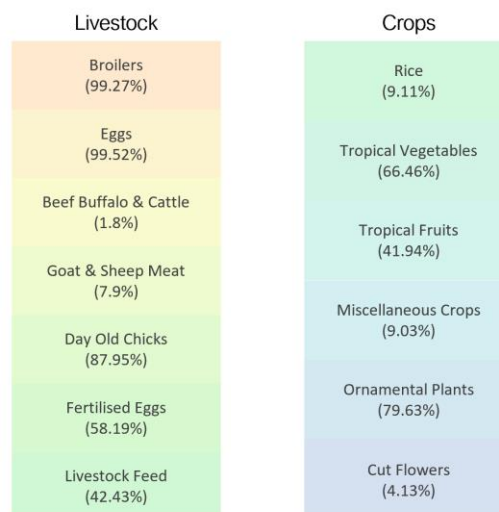


Figure 8 Self-Sufficiency Achievement
(Source: Brunei Darussalam Agriculture and Agrifood Statistics in Brief, 2021)

Food Safety

Brunei Darussalam is committed to ensuring the nation’s health, specifically in its efforts to ensure the safety and quality of food.

Brunei Darussalam Food Authority (BDFA) was established on 1 January 2021, as a competent authority aimed at supporting functions in overseeing legislation and rules such as Fresh Meat Order (2011) (Amendment) (2020) and Public Health (Food) Regulations, Term 182 (Amendment) (2020), enacted to further strengthen food safety and quality issues in the country.

Operationally, BDFA conducts routine activities to ensure food imported into Brunei Darussalam meets food safety requirements, such as conducting microbiological and chemical testing for consignments of imported meat before being approved to be sold in the country, as well as safety confirmation for processed food imported. BDFA also facilitates the development of the local food industry towards meeting the export market’s needs by inspecting food processing premises and producing the required certifications such as Export Health Certificate, Free Sales Certificate for processed foods, and the Declaration of Free from Animal Fat.

Nutrition

On the nutrition front, Brunei Darussalam continues with its strategic initiative, 'Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life', which has adopted the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s global targets for identifying priority areas in maternal, infant and young child nutrition. MOH continues to monitor the progress of achieving maternal, infant and young child nutrition outcomes such as reducing stunting among children under-five, and childhood wasting, controlling childhood obesity, and increasing the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months.

Compared to some countries in the region which are 'burdened' with citizens suffering from up to three forms of malnutrition – overweight, anaemic or stunted growth – Brunei Darussalam is 'burdened' with citizens experiencing one form of malnutrition – being overweight. Brunei Darussalam ranks the second highest among ASEAN countries in obesity rates, whereby nearly 20 per cent of adolescents are obese and the same worrying trends are seen in younger children with a one per cent increase in the prevalence of obesity every year since 2009. A December 2020 survey by the MOH, which involved 183 parents and 140 companies in the food and beverages and advertising industries, indicated that social media was the most frequently used platform to advertise junk food, followed by billboards. The vast majority of respondents believe that inappropriate advertising of food and beverages can contribute to rising childhood obesity.

As one of MOH's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 initiatives and in line with WHO's recommendations in tackling child obesity, the Code of Responsible Marketing of Food and Beverages to Children in Brunei Darussalam was launched in 2021, which spells out food advertising guidelines that stated for all ads promoting sugar-sweetened beverages, energy drinks, syrups as well as items classified as desserts such as cakes, biscuits and pastries are not permitted. The Code will be implemented in phases on various advertising and marketing platforms such as printed media on billboards, posters, newspapers, and magazines, during exhibitions, in cinemas, news websites as well as local radio and television channels.

Other initiatives such as for maintaining nutrition in child care centres, a 'National Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Child Care Centres', Healthier Choice Logo, whereby food industries, particularly food manufacturers and food suppliers, either international or local, are encouraged to reformulate and produce healthier choice products in the market, as well as Food Programmes in schools implemented through MOE, i.e. the Feeding Scheme and the *Program Harapan dan Anak Harapan*, which targeted children from the most disadvantaged, continued to be implemented and monitored by the respective ministries.

Food Systems Resilience and Recovery from COVID-19

Since the start of the pandemic, issues of disruptions of short supply of food is not only unique to Brunei Darussalam, but also globally. As a food-importing country, Brunei Darussalam also faces some food items shortages, which drives up food prices, as evident in the rising consumer price index in recent years since 2020. In response, MOFE has made efforts to ensure sufficient rice stock of more than six-months' supply and sold at reasonable prices. Prices of essential products necessary to meet daily dietary requirements such as cooking oil, rice and powdered infant milk, among others are also being regulated through the enforcement of the Price Control Act.

Achieving resiliency in food production and thus ensuring food security for the nation, requires a whole-of-nation approach and a unified institutional network between the government and the private sectors to strengthen Brunei Darussalam's position in increasing the nation's food production network to achieve self-sustainability. Towards this, in line with the commitment as well as the priorities identified in Brunei Darussalam's Economic Blueprint, a food industry roadmap has been prepared as a guideline to increase the production of safe, *Halal*, and high-quality food and strengthening the value chain of the food system.

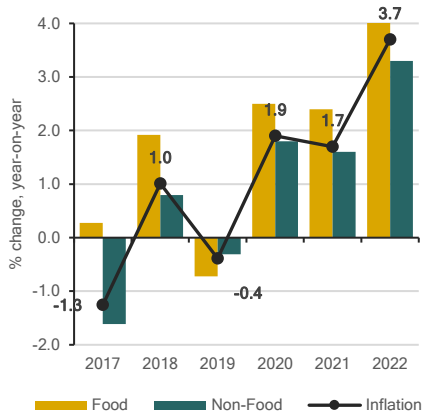


Figure 9 Consumer Price Index
(Source: Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy)

MPRT remains committed to ensure the positive growth of the agriculture and agri-food sector by ensuring strategies and initiatives to boost production and productivity continue to be implemented by developing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and working closely with local farmers and food manufacturers such as through

Agriculture Pilot Project, Contract Farming for youth, Business Expansion Program, Local Market Facilitation, Export Market Facilitation, as well as opening up new areas for crops, livestock and paddy production.

While continuous research and development (R&D) activities conducted by academic institutions such as provided by Universiti Teknologi Brunei's (UTB) Centre for research on Agri-food and Technology (CrAFT) - Brunei Darussalam's first and only research facility focusing on agriculture, food science and nutrition - which provides R&D services to food and beverages businesses, as well as raising awareness towards high quality and *Halal* practices in food provisions conducted by Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre under Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA).

All these endeavours, with support from organisational bodies within the Government and private sectors have the promising potentials to contribute to Brunei Darussalam's sustainable agriculture and agri-food sector, and hence contribute to the country's diversification efforts.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For Brunei Darussalam, the issue of food security is made with reference to food self-reliance and attaining self-sufficiency through sustainable agriculture to increase domestic food production. The COVID-19 pandemic tested global food systems, particularly the supply chain, and with a heavy reliance on imported food, Brunei Darussalam faced challenges. Despite the Government's continued effort to implement various initiatives, strategies, and policies to support self-sufficiency, more must be done to achieve *Wawasan Brunei 2035* targets as well as towards zero hunger.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic and challenges of food security, there must be more actions taken to ensure that there are always preparations and contingencies for unforeseen interruptions such as disrupted food supplies and production operations, in particular on supporting farmers to meet the growing demand with the possibility of scarcity of resources. There is a particular concern with the effects of this on reducing poverty and supporting low-income households. This necessitates policy interventions to support input and food distribution systems, by finding possible solutions, which includes strengthening the small to medium agri-food enterprises through agro-dealer networks to engage in a successful food system transformation programme.

FEATURE 2

Youths and Innovative Agricultural Practices

It is encouraging for Brunei Darussalam to witness a growing interest from the youths in agriculture, innovating within practices and the sector. The younger generation can help introduce innovations and potentially offer new solutions to some of the world's sustainability challenges. There are several notable examples of this.

Youth for Sustainable Farming

Agronect: Brunei Darussalam's Agronect is a digital application developed by sisters, Sarinah and Nursheila Ziziumiza, that provides education and immersive training experiences for farmers and agri-food entrepreneurs, which gives them access to resources they require for sustainable agriculture practices. The platform is designed to make experiential learning of sustainable farming without the need for space, materials, and travel. Through Virtual Reality for training and simulation, the app is found to have improved competency skills while reducing errors by 85 per cent and accelerates learning with an 80 per cent retention rate, four times more concentrated than traditional classroom instruction.

The Agronect application has recently won the Grand Award in APEC Digital Prosperity Award in Bangkok, Thailand, and finalist in SheLovesTech Local Round and Global Round in Singapore, and Special Mention Award in APEC App Challenge in Bangkok, Thailand. It has been credited for not only being an innovative platform for smarter farming techniques and wider participation in the supply chain, but also a concrete contribution to the bio-circular-green economy. The developers continue to explore opportunities and collaborative efforts to promote modern-day farming practices for a secure and sustainable food source.



Agronect wins APEC Award for its education and immersive training for farmers

AgroBIZ Project: AgroBIZ is a collaborative project between LiveWire Brunei and the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) providing a platform and training, turning small-scale agrobusinesses into profit making. In this project, agropreneurs had the opportunity to develop 10 hectares of paddy fields while also receiving the practical skills required to be successful commercial farmers. In February 2020, the first batch of 10 hectares of paddy recorded a yield of 8.5 metric tonnes of paddy per hectare, one of the highest in the country. Through this project Sembada188 yield was planted at the IBTE Agro-Technology Campus plot in Kampong Wasan and the outcome managed to double Agrobiz's target of Metric Tonne per hectare. This remarkable success was the result of the site's irrigation infrastructure, rainwater harvesting and use of pesticide-free and organic fertilisers which were deployed using modern methods including drones. The programme AgroBiz was expanded to AgroBiz Plus giving a special focus on underprivileged individuals to encourage skill development and economic participation through agropreneurship.

AgroBIZ programme has successfully churned out agrobusinesses and technopreneurs that are still actively operational today. More youth led companies like AgroZid Company, and Golden Green are emerging with sustainable and green practices at the heart of their businesses, leading Brunei Darussalam in food security. Other agrosector related products have seen a rise in organic and natural-based materials to generate yields such as Econic Farm and Baja Buddies producing organic fertiliser and BN Greenbay Agriculture specialising in hydroponic systems.



Founders of AgroZid – a farming business formed by AgroBiz programme graduates



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3

Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to strengthen the healthcare system through the principles of Universal Health Coverage, ensuring the provision of services that are fair and accessible to all. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that strong health system is a vital component for preparedness in addressing any health-related emergency, especially in supporting response as well as its management. MOH holds the position that investment in health is critical for the well-being of society; Investment in health generates long and high quality of life. At the same time, it assists in achieving and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals which are not limited to health-related matters. Citizens and residents in Brunei Darussalam are provided with comprehensive and accessible health services in all districts that are provided by the Government of His Majesty the

Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam through the MOH. The development observed under Goal 3 has been encouraging with progress maintained in several key indicators. Brunei Darussalam has maintained high proportions of births in health facilities and attended by skilled personnel, with a low rate of maternal and child mortality. Several notable achievements include high immunisation coverage for diseases attributed to the National Immunisation Programme. Brunei Darussalam’s population has access to and depends on the public healthcare system which provides universal healthcare coverage through highly subsidised healthcare costs. Indicators that show some regressions are concerning, in particular, the indicators that are related to NCDs due to the prevalence of risk factors as a result of lifestyle behaviours.

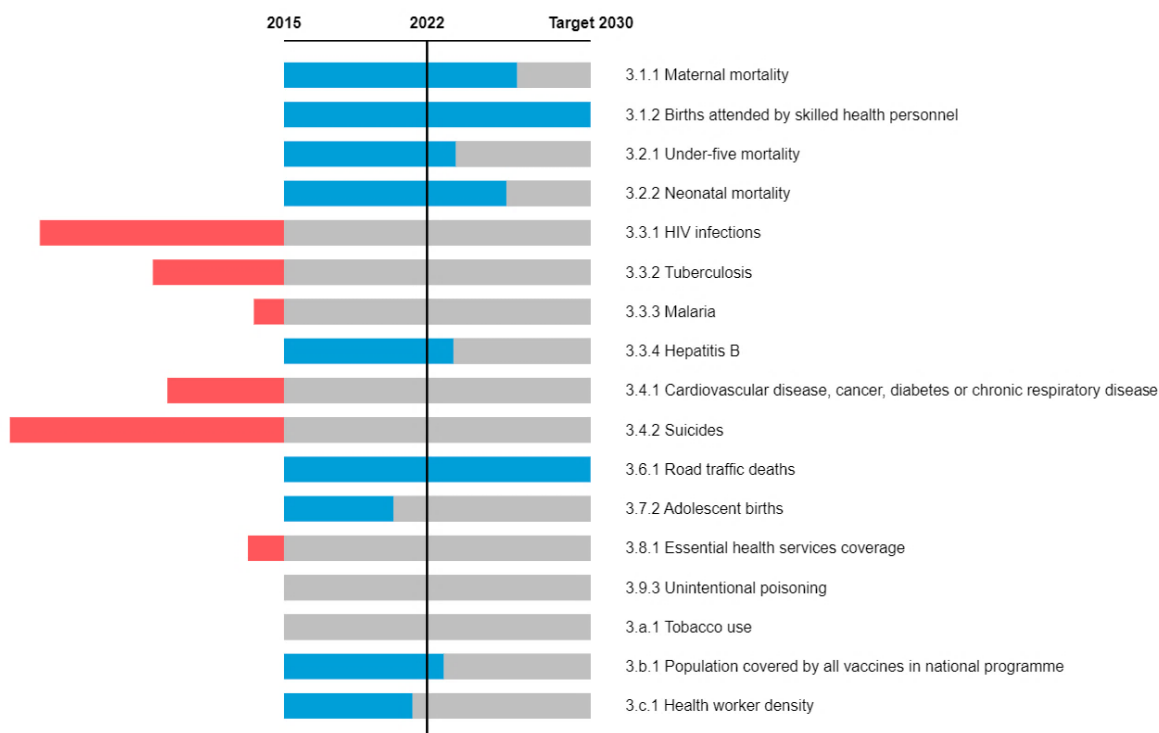


Figure 10 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 3

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Universal Healthcare

Brunei Darussalam affirms the universal right to healthcare, stipulating that each citizen has the right to enjoy a healthy life and to receive comprehensive healthcare with quality standards.

To support this a significant amount is invested in the health sector on an annual basis. As a result, Brunei Darussalam has achieved most of the WHO health-related targets. These include significant reductions in the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) and infant mortality rate (IMR). Figures from the last two decades have shown only slight fluctuations to the current level, which is on par with the standard set in developed nations.

Brunei Darussalam continues to prioritise the development of the health sector as an integral

aspect of achieving sustainable development. Progress has been made and continues in terms of good health and well-being. MOH continues its efforts to ensure the population is in good overall physical and mental health.

As part of Brunei Darussalam's effort to ensure that the health system reaches everyone in need and strengthen the global commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind, Brunei Darussalam continues to provide comprehensive primary health care to all. This includes services to rural and remote villages in the country that includes management of minor illnesses and chronic diseases, and health promotion and prevention through Flying Medical Service.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the wisdom of what is inherent within the 2030 Agenda and at the same time strengthened the need for solutions to be dealt with collaboratively and collectively.

Several key actions were put in place to respond to COVID-19. In addition to setting up major swabbing centres, an additional National Virology Laboratory was constructed to increase the capacity and accelerate the testing process for COVID-19 in the country by ten-fold. To tackle the second wave, an additional virology laboratory called the Brunei COVID-19 AirLab was set up. The new lab was a result of cooperation between the Government and the Borneo Genomic Institution. Community isolation centres were established including a new extension to the National Isolation Centre. All centres are equipped with medical facilities to treat and monitor confirmed positive COVID-19 patients. During the peak of the pandemic, quarantine facilities and arrangements are also prepared for arrivals into Brunei Darussalam from abroad who are required to undergo self-isolation at designated accommodations upon arrival.

One of the most significant efforts made was the introduction of the BruHealth application. As an epidemic response and population engagement platform, BruHealth assists MOH in sharing information and contact tracing. A self-assessment tool was also made available on the BruHealth application to help individuals self-assess possible COVID-19 symptoms and provide real-time information.

In an attempt to ensure information is delivered in a timely and efficient manner, regular press conferences were held to provide the latest information on COVID-19 in Brunei Darussalam. The Health Advice Line 148 was also set up for members of the public who required additional information and health advice. Additional sources of information were also made available through other means, for example, the mobile application Telegram for Gov.bn. The application has been upgraded with additional features to support digitalisation of healthcare services, such as online booking of vaccinations, medical appointments, personal health records tracker, access to video consultations, and an online payment platform.

The Government also developed a vaccination strategy for the citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam, following the guidelines set by WHO and advisory from the MOH Vaccine Technical Committee. The vaccination strategy contributes significantly in slowing down the COVID-19 transmission in the country and has shown an evidence of higher immunity among the people. The National Vaccination Programme is free for all

citizens and people residing in Brunei Darussalam aged 18 years old and above. The vaccination programme distribution strategy is divided into three phases and a vaccination centre was allocated for each district. As of May 2023, 79.2 per cent received three doses of the vaccine. Mobile vaccination services and home visits were also offered to ensure rural and bedridden residents have access to the vaccine.

Health Agenda

As the world transitions to recovering from COVID-19 pandemic, Brunei Darussalam has eased most control measures and looking at further action to improve the healthcare systems. The health initiatives implemented align with the World Health Organisation (WHO) NCDs Global Monitoring Framework with a target to combat a global NCDs and reduce the mortality rate by 2025, which includes reducing inactivity by 10 per cent. The

global indicators include overweight, obesity, and raised blood pressure. These indicators have been used as a basis for key performance indicators under Brunei Darussalam's NCDs prevention. Brunei Darussalam is facing a rising incidence of NCDs. NCDs including cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes mellitus are major causes of mortality in Brunei Darussalam, accounting for close to 67 per cent of all premature deaths.

Noncommunicable Diseases

MOH published The Brunei Darussalam Multisectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (BruMAP-NCD) 2021 to 2025 which serves as guidance towards achieving global and national targets on the prevention and control of NCDs. The action plan takes into consideration a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in tackling NCDs with a mission to prioritise and improve prevention, early detection, and management of NCDs and their risk factors. The goal is to reduce the probability of dying between the ages of 30 and 69 years from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases by 10 per cent by 2025 through four objectives set out, namely:

These objectives have a set of recommended actions for all health and non-health sectors involved and stakeholders identified. In implementing this BruMAP-NCD 2021-2025, the existing Multisectoral Taskforce for Health through the Cross Functional Team and the Ministry of Health Executive Committee through the National NCD Technical Committee will be the coordinating bodies to ensure the implementation of actions and strengthen coordination.

- To strengthen national governance for NCDs prevention and control;
- To reduce NCDs risk factors and protect health;
- To strengthen early detection and clinical management of NCDs and NCDs risk factors; and
- To strengthen NCDs surveillance and research.

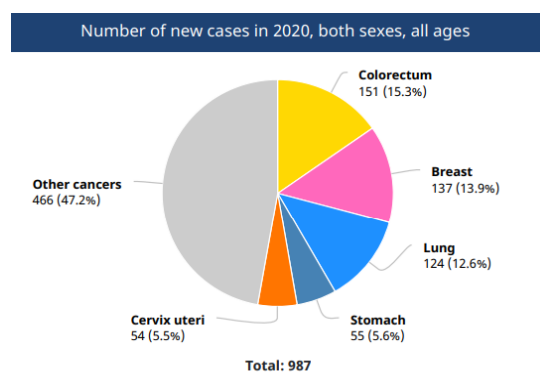


Figure 11 Number of New Cases of NCDs in 2020 (Source: Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam)

Mental Health

In addition to physical health, good mental health is also seen as key to achieving holistic well-being. In recognition of the need to increase awareness of mental health issues, the Mental Health Strategy Group under the Health Promotion Centre (HPC) has initiated several key actions, including the development of guidelines with the collaboration of key agencies such as the MOE in addressing depression and bullying. Mental illness in Brunei Darussalam has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has put more emphasis on the need for a whole-of-nation approach to address the issue. Brunei Darussalam developed a Mental Health Action Plan 2021-2025 as part of its commitment to improving mental health literacy and care. Four main strategies and 12 priority actions are identified in the Mental Health Action Plan:

- Strengthen Effective Leadership and Governance for Mental Health.
- Strengthen Mental Health Services by ensuring the availability and accessibility of comprehensive quality mental health services.
- Strengthen Mental Health Promotion and Mental Disorder Prevention.
- Develop Capacity for National Information Systems and Research for Mental Health.

Sadly, there have been reports of increases in the suicide rate, from an average of five cases reported from 2010 to 2015, to an average of 10 cases from 2016 to 2020³. About 7,000 people (approximately 1.5 per cent of the country's population) are reportedly treated for mental illness, and up to 40 new adult cases and about 600 follow-up cases are seen each month by the Adult Psychiatry Services³. As reported in 2021, Bru-HIMS data showed that around 1,515 individuals were diagnosed with anxiety disorder, and more than 900 individuals also experienced depressive disorder. A health helpline provides crisis support for those struggling with mental disorders and awareness programmes are actively carried out to tackle this issue, not just by the government but also by private sectors as well as NGOs, creating awareness on mental health issues, reducing stigma and increasing support.

Brunei Darussalam, as the ASEAN Chair 2021, also placed emphasis on caring for the people and each other's well-being. Towards this, among others, in October 2021, the Declaration on the Elimination of Bullying of Children in ASEAN was adopted, to strengthen concerted efforts and undertake appropriate measures to promote and protect children in ASEAN against all forms of bullying in different settings, ensuring that their best interests and welfare are upheld. At the same time, ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners also recognised the importance of strengthening regional cooperation especially towards addressing the impacts of the pandemic on mental health.

Creating Health-Conscious Citizens

MOH encourages workplaces to provide supportive environments and actions for employees in taking preventative measures to control NCDs. In line with this effort, HPC introduced various programmes such as i) the Workplace and Health (WAH) Programme; and ii) the Happy Environment and Lifestyle (HEAL) Programme. The WAH Programme focuses on encouraging the workplace to provide a supportive environment where employees can be more active, eat healthy diets and also have good mental well-being.

Meanwhile, HEAL is aimed at physical activity interventions. These programmes were funded by Gleneagles Jerudong Park Medical Center (JPMC) following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between MOH and Gleneagles JPMC, showcasing one of the biggest collaborations of a public-private partnership (PPP) ever held. They also engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including schools, communities, and businesses. The projects also include group health talks, counselling, exhibition, BMI health screening, as well as free after-work hours group exercise sessions for all civil servants.

³ Brunei Darussalam Mental Health Action Plan 2022-2025

To date, over 10,000 government personnel from 13 ministries have participated in the WAH health screen programme, and over 200 WAH exercises have been conducted through their appointed Fitness Studio Facilitators.

Other initiatives have been introduced to encourage citizens to practice a healthy lifestyle including National Physical Activity Guideline, which provides recommendations on the amount of physical activity, the health benefits and disadvantages of

sedentary behaviour for children, adolescents, adults and elderly, and those with chronic conditions and special physical needs. This guideline was also prepared in alignment with the WHO Guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour. Several initiatives have been introduced to support this, such as a National Campaign to improve walking steps known as BN on The Move, and The Bandarku Ceria Weekly Car-Free Zone, to encourage people to engage in sports, leisure, business, and recreational activities.

Universal Health Through Digitalisation

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation in healthcare globally, and Brunei Darussalam is no exception. There is now a need to embrace technology to support the changing demands within health. Brunei Darussalam is also exploring the possibility of introducing telehealth and telemedicine service, moving towards precision

public health, an emerging discipline that applies genomics and other big data tools and technologies to investigate and control health threats in communities. This is part of the Ministry's continuous effort and initiative to embrace new technology as well as strengthen the resilience of Brunei Darussalam to the healthcare ecosystem.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Goal 3 seeks to ensure the health and well-being of all ages. Investing in health remains a priority, however, the challenges are in ensuring sustainability in the long-term when faced with future changes such as changes in demographics due to ageing and advancements in disease control.

With that, future health spending is expected to rise even further as new techniques and therapies become available. Nonetheless, the future is promising with the availability of data, technology, and artificial intelligence which could enable improved well-being and real-time interventions that allow us to get ahead of sickness and be far ahead of the disease.

FEATURE 3

Healthcare Data Intelligence and Cross Border Collaboration

MOH and EYVD Technology established the MOH Intelligence Hub at EYVD Campus on 1 November 2022. The opening of the Hub is part of MOH's efforts to strengthen the resilience of Brunei's healthcare ecosystem. The Hub contains the Epidemic Intelligence and Response Unit (Disease Control Division), a surveillance centre to monitor the nationwide spread of diseases; the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Unit; and the Digital Health Unit. In the future, more government health units are planned including the Behavioural Insights Programme, the National Clinical Research Unit, and the Non-Communicable Disease Unit.

The MOH Intelligence Hub symbolise the ministry's strategic vision and forward planning. It represents the Ministry of Health's commitment to embrace and adopt new technologies and in digital health transformation. The ministry will continue to proactively leverage technology to further accelerate the digital optimisation of Brunei's healthcare ecosystem. Recognising the efficacy of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence in optimising sharper insights and outcomes for public health, the intelligence hub will explore the use of science and technology in transforming public health policymaking. It also provides a research ecosystem and infrastructure that promotes partnerships, cross-learnings, and collaboration with academic and scientific experts for innovative solutions to modern healthcare issues.

The Epidemic Intelligence and Response Unit Surveillance Centre specifically leverages a recently developed automated communicable disease surveillance system linked with clinical and laboratory data to track and monitor the emergence and spread of over 50 infectious diseases in real-time.

Cross-Border Collaboration to Strengthen Health Systems

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National University of Singapore Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health was signed as a cross-border collaboration to strengthen health systems between Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. Under MOU includes key elements such as:

- Building the research ecosystem and infrastructure to conduct research relevant to policy-making;
- Organising and participating in joint academic and scientific activities; and
- Identifying opportunities for knowledge transfer, capability building, and joint research and development in areas of mutual interest.

Given the increasingly complex health challenges in a borderless world today, there is much value that we can realise by fostering greater cross-border collaborations to improve our public health responses collectively. Through this regional collaboration, the healthcare systems in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore can be strengthened. Brunei Darussalam is also happy to share key initiatives and learnings with the rest of our ASEAN member countries to improve public health across the region.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Life Long Opportunities for All

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

An education system that includes high quality teachers, students and schools providing comprehensive educational opportunities is key to excellent human resource development. The focus remains on ensuring every student in Brunei Darussalam is equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed in the 21st Century and beyond, in line with our national values of *Melayu Islam Beraja* (Malay Islamic Monarchy or MIB).

In general, some improvements were seen across the indicators, with inequality indices for education indicators, formal and informal education and training, and the proportion of schools with access to electricity remain on track and aligned with the reporting to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). There is an increase in the proportion of youth enrolled in vocational education. However, regression is reported in terms of ICT skills. Further analysis indicated that there are possible issues either in the data reporting or in the methodology.

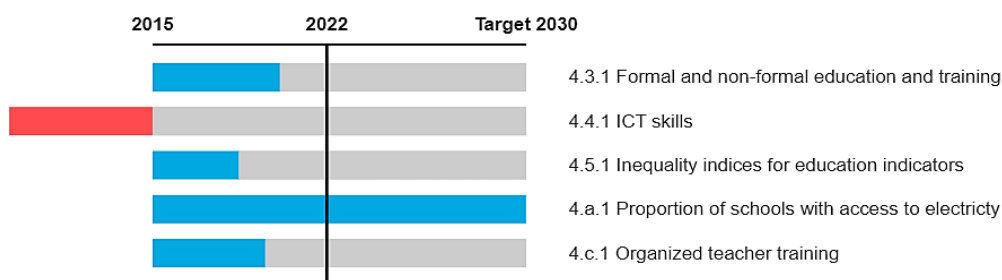


Figure 12 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 4

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Universal Access to Quality Education

Universal access to quality education remains a focus for Brunei Darussalam, emphasising equality and equity for all learners. MOE remains committed to providing equitable quality education guided by the values of MIB to develop future-ready citizens equipped with knowledge and skills of the 21st century. The educational policies and legislations have enabled the nation to achieve sound results in the participation rate in organised learning, Universal Primary Education, and other literacy indicators. Performance in gender parity, life skills, and quality education are also highly encouraging.

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to meeting the Goal 4 targets including investing in early childhood education, promoting lifelong learning, and widening sustained access to higher education. Students in Brunei Darussalam also have equal opportunities to gain knowledge, regardless of gender. Continuous efforts have been implemented to strengthen standards and curriculum. A number of frameworks are also being developed to implement a curriculum based on 21st century skills such as the Financial Literacy Competency Framework for School Children and Adults and Digital Citizenship.

The Brunei Darussalam Literacy and Numeracy National Standard complements the Learning Support Programme to ensure high mastery of literacy and numeracy skills by providing a responsive support ecosystem to address learners' diverse learning and developmental needs. Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) has maintained throughout, such as GER at primary education maintaining at 100 per cent. The figure shows a stable participation rate in organised learning. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) provisions for youth are provided by public and private institutions, where programmes align with the national manpower needs. Continuous collaboration and partnerships ensure the provision of school facilities and educational resources remain of high quality.

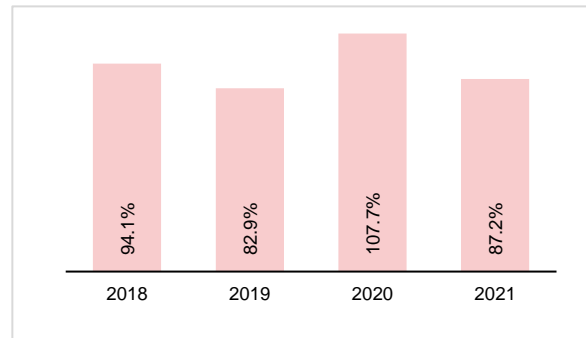


Figure 13 Participation Rate in Organised Learning (Source: Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam)

This includes providing facilities for students with special needs to improve accessibility.

Supporting Teachers Towards Quality Teaching

There is a constant emphasis on upgrading teacher professionalisation and career path to support and incentivise teachers as valued professionals to deliver the highest quality education.

Changes introduced include providing teacher training and professional development; career path and opportunities; empowering teachers; and professional accountability. The figure shows the need to strengthen the proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications at the pre-primary level, especially in the private educational institutions where teachers are certified to be in the teaching profession, but has yet to attain the required academic qualifications.

Continuous development programmes are held to support teachers on how to embrace new methods of supporting student learning, progressing from a didactic approach (focusing on a process of memorisation) towards holistic styles and approaches ('active learning'). The COVID-19 pandemic also triggered the provision and delivery of professional development for teachers via an online platform, and later evolved into a blended learning approach. Training on the basic use of online platforms for e-learning is also provided.

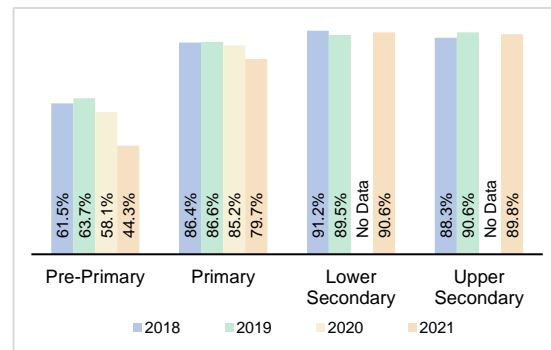


Figure 14 Proportion of Teachers with the Minimum Required Qualifications. (Source: Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam)

School leadership is an equally important factor in developing quality education, where various professional development programmes are also conducted to ensure the acquisition of practical skills, tools, and techniques to support effective, efficient, and equitable leaders in education.

Collaborative efforts are continued to learn the best practices in teaching and learning through a number of platforms such as joint lesson observations, discussion sessions, sharing of resources, and school visits.

Maintaining Inclusivity for Students with Special Educational Needs

The education system aspires to provide access to education to every child regardless of their ability. Inclusive education signified the country's recognition and endeavour to promote an inclusive learning environment for children with special educational needs (SEN). Special Education Policy Guidelines and Special Education Framework allow for provisions to be made for students with special educational needs to be included in mainstream schools. The well-being of children with disabilities and SEN in schools are always prioritised with the support of specialised professionals through various stakeholders.

During the COVID-19 pandemic with school closures and social distancing, families of children with disabilities found childcare, education, and rehabilitation challenging. However, SEN students still received close guidance and support from SEN teachers for online learning. Teachers, trained in ICT skills and multimedia could adapt and apply flexible methods. Teaching and learning were provided through a digital platform, and teachers shifted their role to that of a facilitator.

Parents were encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process and be in constant communication on the students' progress, welfare, and well-being. The integration of information technology and mobile devices in learning facilitated teachers' training, where exchange and support, through webinars, chat groups, video meetings, online training, resources, and document sharing were organised.

To complement and strengthen the special education programmes, continuous provision of equal and equitable access to quality education has been made possible through the establishment of Centre of Excellence (COE) that have more suitable infrastructure to accommodate the physical needs and learning facilities of students with special needs. A total of four schools has been identified as COE throughout the nation and more will be established in the future.

Strengthening Quality in Technical, Vocational, Higher, and Continuing Education

The quality and effectiveness of teaching delivery in technical and vocational education continue to be emphasised. The Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) Core Competency Framework guides the initiatives to equip students with the competencies that meet industries' standards. The technical vocational curriculum is continuously updated through strong cooperation and collaboration with key stakeholders, to ensure it remains relevant and meet the needs.

Brunei Darussalam's Higher Education institutions have obtained international recognition that measures specific ability criteria comparable to international universities. The formation of the Competency Frameworks in Higher Education enables the development of higher quality human resource management for the leaders in the public institutions of higher education.

The rankings of the universities in Brunei Darussalam have improved, signifying improvements in higher education quality. To support lifelong learning, higher institutions have introduced the Postgraduate Micro-Credentials Programme, allowing professionals and graduates the opportunity to improve their skills and upgrade qualifications within Brunei Darussalam Qualification Framework (BDQF).

The Education System emphasises lifelong learning to promote a continuous learning culture, encourage attainment of new knowledge and improve existing skills. Opportunities for lifelong learning continues to progress through the lifelong Learning Centre, the L3 Centre under MOE, and other organisations to help people gain skills through upskilling and reskilling.

Learning under Different Circumstances

According to UNESCO, 1.5 billion students worldwide faced disruptions in the education system due to the COVID-19 pandemic⁴. Brunei Darussalam was no exception to these disturbances. Immediate and transformative nationwide actions were critical to adapting the education system, shifting physical classroom-based learning to a new and adaptive education digital model which saw online and remote learning.

With educational institutions forced to close, teachers had to transition quickly into an online mode of learning, which displaced and changed methods of teaching drastically. Online education was seen to be more viable for learning continuity while adhering to the control measures introduced. Teachers' and students' use of digital tools helped to prevent a standstill in education and lessen the adverse impact of learning delays.

As the pandemic progressed, several adjustments within the education system had to be made. One of them was students' assessment, where an alternative assessment of progress replaced traditional written examinations. Grading was carried out on the portfolio of the students' work and a quality assurance process was introduced to ensure the assessment is a fair, valid and equitable method. Home Learning Packs were also provided for students with difficulties accessing online learning, and Home Learning Programmes were broadcasted on national television, including for the religious students.

Other commendable actions were carried out with the spirit of the whole-of-nation to ensure access to learning maintained during the pandemic. The Brunei Community came together with various initiatives to support E-learning. Brunei Darussalam's Telecommunication Industry, for example provided a total of 15,000 units of laptops

and 1,700 mobile devices for those from underprivileged families⁵. MUIB and JAPEM provided Arabic and Religious Primary Schools students with laptops, tablets and sim cards. AITI championed the first Donation Drive for new and used computer devices to support online learning in collaboration with MTIC and MOE, where 1,515 devices were distributed to students from low-income families⁶.

Once restrictions were lifted, MOE was quick to respond to the possibility of learning loss or learning deficit by introducing the Education Response and Recovery Strategy (e2Rs) with four initiatives:

- Learning Recovery Programme in literacy, numeracy and science;
- Social Emotional and Well-Being programme addressing mental health disorders, social and emotional issues, including anxiety, stress, and depression;
- Student Learning Survey, to measure learning loss impacted by COVID-19; and
- Monitoring and Evaluation System, to monitor the impact of Learning Recovery Programme and evaluate key strategies for improvement.

Additional well-being support was also provided through a welfare unit under MOE known as *Unit Kesejahteraan Pemimpin Sekolah dan Tenaga Pengajar*. Hotlines were established to support both students and teachers - *Sejahtera* hotline to support school leaders and school teachers; the *'Aafiah* hotline for students' welfare and well-being; the *Kalinga* hotline for advice, consultation and motivation for learning as well as personal issues; and the *Syifa* hotline to provide counseling support for students and parents of Arabic and Religious schools.

⁴ UNESCO. (n.d.). *Education: from school closure to recovery*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/covid-19/education-response>

⁵ UNN. (2022, 9 March). *Brunei Telecommunication Industry Supports Ministries' Approach to e-Learning through its e-Education Solution*.

⁶ Authority Info-communications Technology Industry (AITI) of Brunei Darussalam Annual Report 2020/2021

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a number of challenges and setbacks affecting students' learning progress. School closures meant learning loss, and there were also effects on the health and well-being of the students. Efforts however, continued to ensure minimal disruption to learning whilst ensuring the well-being and safety of students and the school community.

The challenges related to Goal 4 are mostly related to sustaining the efforts to raise quality and standards in education. Efforts are ongoing, for example, with teacher training to tackle the varying level of skill and competence especially in new areas such as digital learning, however training and transitioning teachers to new methods takes time. Multiple stakeholders, including the public, can help to overcome these challenges through joint efforts, such as provision of learning resources, especially for those from lower-income families. The focus must also continue to be given to strengthen the development of students' literacy and numeracy.

Reforms aspire that there will be increased student active participation in a more pro-active learning environment, which in turn will help build students' skills such as communication skills, teamwork, and critical thinking skills in line with the needs of the 21st century. Post-secondary pathways must continue to be monitored to ensure that every student will have the opportunity to develop potential, talents and abilities. This will help ensure that there will always be support and assistance for all students.

Competent school leaders will undoubtedly help to guide teaching staff and develop a strong school environment. This coupled with the availability of relevant teaching resources and materials, solid professional development and support from parents and the community, will lead to success. Overall, the national education system will continue to be strengthened in all aspects. This will bring about students' academic success and social, mental, physical, and cognitive development.

FEATURE 4

Capacity Building Initiatives

Under the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC), two initiatives have been introduced: 1) **Learn and Grow**, and 2) **Growth for Excellence** with the objective of enhancing employability and marketability of locals through upskilling and reskilling programmes as well as on-the-job experiential learning.

Under the **Learn and Grow**, locals can pursue and further their studies via the following pathways: i) Vocational and Technical Track; ii) Skills and Professional Acquisition Track; and iii) Academic Track. The initiative also aims to provide skills accreditation or certification in areas where potential jobs are available. Some of the programmes include:

SkillsPlus: Funding assistance will be provided for short courses of 1 year or less that are in line with MPEC focus areas. This provides opportunities for local jobseekers, i-Ready Apprentices and local employees in the private sector including freelance workers to reskill and upskill themselves.

Study in Professional Institutions (SPIN): Funding assistance will be provided for academic and professional courses that align with MPEC focus areas. This enables locals to pursue professional certification and bridge the skills gap between supply and demand for certain professionals.

Trade Skills Programme: This programme aims to enhance technical and practical skills that can lead to specific trades or professional skills. Graduates will be awarded with BDQF Level or Skills Certificate (Brunei National Occupational Skills Standards, BNOSS).

Under the **Growth for Excellence**, locals are given an opportunity to gain work experience and on-the-job skills in the public and private sector in order to increase their employability. It is open to unemployed graduates with Degree and above, Higher National Diploma and TVET qualifications. For those undergoing their apprenticeship in the private sector, there are additional benefits in the form of top-up allowances from the 11th month. This is aimed to boost interest for the apprentices to join the private sector.

To further support the development of a skilled workforce in line with the needs of the industries, the **Manpower Industry Steering Committee (MISC)**, created under MPEC, act as a platform that seeks to foster collaboration between industry players, regulators and training/academic institutions. The objective of the MISC is to align the industry needs with the right manpower supply, at the right time. To support in building a pipeline of industry-ready workforce, several competency standards and training programmes have been developed, to equip eligible graduates with the relevant skills, competencies and experience in the relevant fields through professional placements and/or on-the-job training in the respective sectors. Some of the programmes include:

iLEAP (Industry Learn and Excel Apprenticeship Programme): An in-service training programme designed to upskill/reskill local employees from private companies in the Energy industry in four skill domains (Marking-Fitting, Scaffolding, Rigging and Blasting-Painting). The programme is conducted by Lifelong Learning Centre under the MISC Working Group for Energy Industry Skill Certificate (ISC) in collaboration with MPEC as the main sponsor and IBTE as the awarding organisation of the programme.

iSkill: A qualification programme that has been developed with close collaboration between the Energy Industry with the support of the MISC Working Group for Energy and IBTE. The iSkill programme is specific to augment the employability gap in the Oil and Gas sector as it prescribes a higher level of skill-based competence assessment. This emphasises practical and real work exposure to the industry.

Skills Hub (Skills, Knowledge, Industry's Lifelong Learning) Hub: Industry's own centralised training platform with collaborative network and shared resources. The lifelong learning centre acts as the industry's focal point and training executing organisation. These are short training courses of 6 to 12 months and are industry professional development.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5

Achieve Gender Equality and Empower Women and Girls

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam continues to build on its efforts in advancing gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Recognising that women and girls are agents of change and catalysts to socio-economic development and the preservation of peace and security, strengthening effective mechanisms to promote women’s development becomes an increasingly important task.

There is an improvement in the proportion of women in managerial positions and nearly every woman in Brunei Darussalam owns a mobile telephone. There is a regressive trend in indicator 5.3.1 i.e., women married before the age of 15 and 18, as there has been a rise in cases for the number of women married before the age of 18 in recent years. There are data gaps in indicator 5.5.2 in seats held by women in the national parliament.

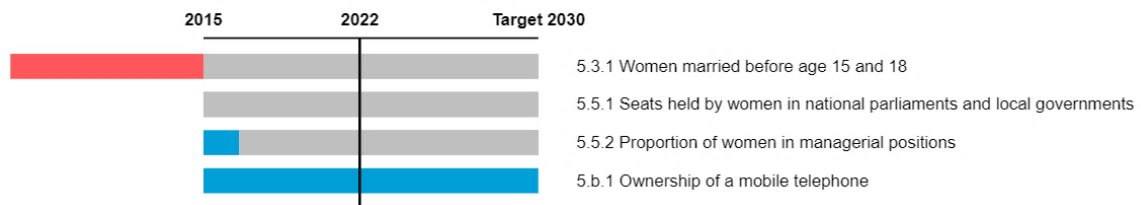


Figure 15 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 5

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Women Development

One significant progress in Goal 5 is the commissioning of a national study on women’s development, whereby in April 2022, Brunei Darussalam, through MCYS undertook a year-long Research on Women’s Development in Brunei Darussalam, whose research methodology included a national household survey on over 1,400 women, 400 at-risk women and almost 300 men.

The research aimed to identify gaps and challenges to support the formulation of policies that would improve Brunei Darussalam’s efforts towards greater gender equity. Preliminary findings indicated that although remarkable progress has been made toward women’s development, there are still some areas that require policy attention to

better support women and girls in reaching their full and optimum potential. The government will use the outcome of the research to review its National Plan of Action on Women, and formulate a new Plan of Action on Women that is more relevant, practical and reflective of the needs of women and girls in Brunei Darussalam. It is hoped that the research can provide policy recommendations to further develop women’s optimum potential through gender equity, capacity building and self-development so they can become the driving force for transformation in the development of the country. Identified priority areas include promoting and protecting women’s rights, healthcare, economic empowerment, employment and work-life balance.

Protection of Women and Girls

Brunei Darussalam's laws and legislations provide protection to women and girls, such as through the Women and Girls Protection Act (Cap.120), Children and Young Persons Act (Cap.219), provisions in the Penal Code (Cap.22), Unlawful Carnal Knowledge Act (Cap.29), Syariah Penal Code Order 2013 and Islamic Family Law Act (Cap. 217). There is recognition that more protection must be afforded to women and girls. For instance, sexual harassment has become an increasingly concerning issue and calls have been made to intensify action against sexual harassment. In response, the government is currently developing guidelines addressing sexual harassment in the public sector.

The National Consultation on the Mid-Term Review of Progress on the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Eliminating Violence Against Women (RPA VAW) was held in 2021 in Brunei Darussalam. A total of 26 representatives from relevant government agencies and civil society organisations were invited to participate in the roundtable discussion. The national consultation was organised by JAPEM together with Brunei Darussalam's Commissioner on Women's Rights, ACWC with support from the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UN ROAP).

One of the main recommendations to accelerate progress on RPA VAW in Brunei Darussalam is the establishment of a National Taskforce on EVAW is necessary which can assist the following areas: i) Coordinate efforts in collecting prevalence data; ii) Establish guidelines on the collection and analysis of data on VAW; iii) Facilitate the development of legal frameworks that will address VAW; iv) Plan capacity-building programs as well as develop SOPs on performance standards for service providers on handling of VAW cases; and v) Develop guidelines for support services for victims/survivors.

NGOs focusing on women's issues have been active in calling on for more protection for women and girls and have also been promoting awareness about the protections offered to women and girls. Notable NGOs that are active in creating awareness about women's issues are Project Women Brunei, Survivors.bn, *Persatuan Siswazah Brunei*, *Majlis Wanita Negara Brunei Darussalam* and *Persatuan Membangun Wanita dan Masyarakat* (MAWAR). Project Women Brunei, for example, regularly holds webinars and awareness programmes including in rural areas where women and girls are informed about the rights and protections provided by the government.

Women Empowerment

The Government's commitment in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is reflected in the policies which are implemented and applied to all sections of the community. Women are also empowered through training and skills development. Youth Development Centre, for example, provides a variety of skill training courses. This includes training for welfare recipients including single and young mothers, designed based on the individual's skills and interests to upgrade their employability and entrepreneurship skills.

The National Plan of Action on Women is currently being revised, where the outcomes from the Research on Women's Development in Brunei Darussalam will be incorporated to strengthen the development and empowerment of women in the country.

Numerous initiatives and activities have been implemented, such as the PREPanita Forum (Preping Women). The forum was launched in conjunction with International Women's Day Celebration in 2021 in collaboration with the Brunei Graduates Association. Topics covered include 'Welcome to the World of Work' and 'Communi-Kasih: Communication is the Key to Happiness'. These activities among others, aimed to enhance awareness of the importance of self-empowerment, and preparing both women and men with an exposure and ways to come forward (or seek help).

Women entrepreneurs are also being supported either through the government or various other agencies. The impact of this has been increasing recognition of Brunei Darussalam's women business leaders showcasing the government's commitment to promoting women empowerment and equity.

The achievements of Brunei Darussalam's women entrepreneurs are further recognised at regional and international awards such as the ASEAN Young Women Entrepreneurs Award 2022. Darussalam Enterprise (DARE), as the main agency promoting and facilitating the growth and development of local Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), supports small-scale businesses owned by women through their flagship programmes, namely the Institute Business Academy and Micro Business Bootcamp.

A total of 30 Brunei-based businesswomen have been selected to be the first cohort of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), a worldwide initiative of the United States of America's State Department (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs), as part of the White House-led Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. The programme gives enterprising women the knowledge, network, and access they need to launch and grow successful businesses. Other funded programmes, such as Micro-Grant for Empowerment and Special Underprivileged Mothers and Empowerment Entrepreneurship Development are also available.

Women Participation

The Government promotes and encourages women to participate in all fields whereby various policies, legislations, and regulations have been introduced. Women and girls are also given equal opportunities to education and training to improve their skills and knowledge in line with the current and future trends. Women and girls in Brunei Darussalam are actively involved in sports and the country has seen a growing participation of women in sporting events regionally and internationally.

Notably, Her Royal Highness Princess 'Azemah Ni'matul Bolkiah binti His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, who is also a polo athlete, has been appointed as ASEAN Women in Sports Ambassador in December 2021. This move was to promote gender equality and women empowerment through sports across the region and spread encouraging messages to the ASEAN Community.

Her Royal Highness was also one of the panelists during the 'ASEAN We Score Campaign: Break Records, Make History', a hybrid talk show in conjunction with the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which was broadcasted from Jakarta and Japan on YouTube Live.

There has been a rise in uptake by women in high-level or managerial positions in the public sector, including positions related to upholding of peace and security, such as Ambassador-at-Large, Cabinet Minister, members of the Legislative Council, senior officials in Ministries, and leadership positions in the private sector.



*Her Royal Highness Princess 'Azemah as ASEAN Women Sports Ambassador 2021
(Source: ASEAN Women in Sports Ambassadors)*

In 2022, the first woman Cabinet Minister was appointed in her portfolio as Minister of Education. Her Excellency Ar. Siti Rozaimeryanty binti Dato Seri Laila Jasa Haji Abdul Rahman, for the period 2023 to 2025 is Brunei Darussalam's first female Secretary-General of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA).

In the area of ICT and innovative technology, Brunei Darussalam has seen an achievement in mobile phone ownership among its women where nearly every woman owns a mobile device. To further support women's empowerment in this area, the Government organised various capacity-building programmes, such as Girls in ICT Day and digital skills training for senior citizens in all districts, and webinars that cover a wide range of topics including basic ICT skills, online safety and security, introduction to e-commerce and its opportunities, useful mobile applications, online shopping and cyber security tips for women and girls.

Women in Brunei Darussalam are also recipients of awards, such as the 2021 ASEAN ICT Awards, 2022 Asia-Pacific ICT Awards and Women of the Future Awards in the Science, Technology and Digital category.

Brunei Darussalam celebrates International Women's Day every year, to appreciate the role and recognize the achievements of women in joint efforts to drive the country's progress in various fields.

In 2023, the International Women's Day in Brunei Darussalam was celebrated with the theme 'DigitALL: Innovation and Technology', where MCYS organised a forum in collaboration with Womentechmakers Brunei called 'Forum W-IT' or 'Women in Technology'. The forum panelists shared their experiences as female innovators and the challenges they faced in the field of ICT, and gave inspiration to women to venture into the digital and ICT field.

Regional and International Cooperation on Women Development

Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to the sustainable development of women and girls in the region. As the ASEAN Chair for 2021, Brunei Darussalam promoted inclusivity with the theme, 'We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper', which also coincided with the organisation's 54th anniversary.

As the Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) in 2021, Brunei Darussalam has led some significant achievements on women and girls, such as the development of the inaugural ASEAN publication, 'Gender Outlook: Achieving the SDGs for All and Leaving No Woman or Girl Behind', which was born out of a partnership between ASEAN Secretariat and United Nations Women. The study provides new data, advocating for increased investments for vulnerable women and girls, leading to strategic and evidence-based policy making.

Additional publications include 'ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security', where the findings from the study will facilitate policies and aid programmes for ASEAN member states towards a resilient, sustainable, and dynamic community that leaves no one behind.

The ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework, launched in 2022, outlines key strategies and priority areas to further enhance gender equality and women's empowerment in the ASEAN region.

Participation in regional dialogues and engagements, such as the inaugural ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Dialogue on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, demonstrates unwavering commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in Southeast Asia.

On the global level, Brunei Darussalam was represented at the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), focusing on empowering and integrating women with technology and innovations, accelerating actions for women's development and overall sustainable agenda. The session also raised awareness of issues concerning women's empowerment and civic engagements.

Brunei Darussalam recognises and values women and girls' contributions in the regional and international arena. Brunei Darussalam ranks 61st out of 195 countries on the 2021 United Nations Gender Inequality Index and 104th out of 146th in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Index 2022. Whole-of-nation efforts and initiatives have driven positive changes for women's development in Brunei Darussalam. The country continues to strive for further achievements in Goal 5.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Brunei Darussalam has made great improvements towards gender mainstreaming, gender equality and empowerment for the society, as evident through the country's progress in these areas. However, more actions are required for the acceleration of achievements on Goal 5 in the country such as enhancing capacity of policy makers and increasing the number of women involved in national development planning through governance and leadership training programmes for women.

To further strengthen the protection of women and girls against violence, more research and development in initiatives and actions are required to further strengthened the Plan of Action on Women so that key actions are strongly aligned with the Regional Plan of Action on extreme violence against women (VAW).

There is also opportunity for improving technical capacity in data governance for gender equality so that data collection meets international standards. In order to address gender gaps in the country meaningfully, data disaggregation is crucial so that the true picture of gender progress on the ground is available. With disaggregated data, there is opportunity for enhancing inclusivity and ensuring no one is left behind for Brunei Darussalam.

Lastly, the country is continuously building its capacities and expertise in areas of VAW through its high-level international and regional participations and partnerships, and will continue to explore other opportunities and mechanisms to build on capacity-enhancing programmes.

FEATURE 5

Leaving No Women Behind: Supporting Women and Girls' Development

Project Women Brunei is a non-profit, social enterprise committed to awareness-raising and promoting the safeguarding of the rights of women and girls, and women's participation in the development agenda. The group has been active since 2019, working closely with communities on the local, regional, and global front affecting change on all levels. Project Women Brunei aims to educate, engage and empower women and girls in Brunei Darussalam to enhance their capacity and involvement in the economic, social, and environmental. Part of its mission is also to be a centralised resource network in advancing women and girls' development through various stakeholder engagements and partnerships from local and rural communities to intergovernmental institutions.

Project Women Brunei focuses on engaging women and girls from under-represented and minority groups like indigenous women, migrant women, and women with disabilities. They regularly conduct community engagements, especially amongst indigenous women and girls, as key stakeholders in the campaign. These visits to rural areas empower women in marginalised communities by raising awareness of their rights, responsibilities, and ways to access justice for protection. These closer engagements with vulnerable communities also provide more disaggregated data, allowing for effective policymaking and programmes driven by evidence. Integrating and empowering minority groups' representations will support the Leaving No One Behind agenda.



Dialogue session with indigenous group in rural area, Bukit Udal (Source: Project Women Brunei)

The work and efforts by Project Women Brunei are crucial for driving SDG achievements in the country. Looking into different areas of women and girls' development including health, economy, and education, Project Women Brunei supports the journey towards SDGs across Goal 5, Goal 8, Goal 10, and Goal 16.

The following are flagship projects and campaigns under Project Women Brunei that aids in the promotion of women and girls' rights, safety, and well-being:

Project Women Pro: This project explores different ways to enhance mechanisms for women's protection and rights, focusing on marginalised communities. Under this project, the group and its members conducted awareness-raising activities such as campaigns on CEDAW. Other campaigns include advocating for improvements in women's development agenda, such as social welfare protection for women and girls and their physical and mental health.

Project GirlSafe: This initiative aims to promote awareness around women and girls' reproductive health and rights as well as raise awareness around efforts to safeguard of girls and children.

Project WISE: A project designed to support livelihood programmes, especially for women in marginalised communities, and promote employment opportunities.

Project WIT: This initiative fosters ICT skills and embraces technology amongst women and girls.



Engaging youths and men in dialogue for women's rights and protection (Source: Project Women Brunei)



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6

Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam continues to maintain that 100 per cent of the population has access to clean and safe drinking water, 94 per cent of the population has access to sanitation, and that wastewater treatment service is provided at no cost to the public. Sanitation management in Brunei Darussalam is available to all and is provided by the Government through sewer connections of public and private buildings into centralised sewage systems. There are concerns with the regression in the water quality as in indicator 6.3.2 and the data

gap in indicator 6.4.2, where the proportion of bodies of water in Brunei Darussalam with good ambient water quality has declined in recent years. Nevertheless, Brunei Darussalam continues to ensure that everyone has access to clean drinking water. The country has outlined the national plan, Brunei Darussalam Towards Water Security 2021-2035, a commitment towards efficient and sustainable management of water systems to ensure continuous access to clean drinking water.

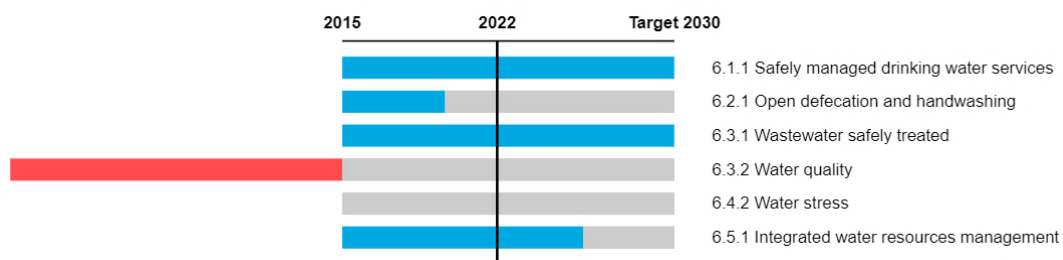


Figure 16 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 6

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Brunei Darussalam Towards Water Security 2021-2035

In Brunei Darussalam, citizens and residents have long enjoyed clean water in their homes, where 100 per cent of its population receives clean water through safely managed drinking water services. In 2019, 93 per cent of its population enjoyed access to safely managed sanitation services, and this has improved to 94 per cent in 2022.

Sustainable management of water and sanitation remains a national priority, with the development of the Brunei Darussalam Roadmap Towards Water Security 2021-2035 in response to the national needs and commitment to continue to provide availability and access to clean water. The national plan outlines four key strategies for Water Security namely Water Balance, Water Efficiency, Water Quality, and Water Governance.

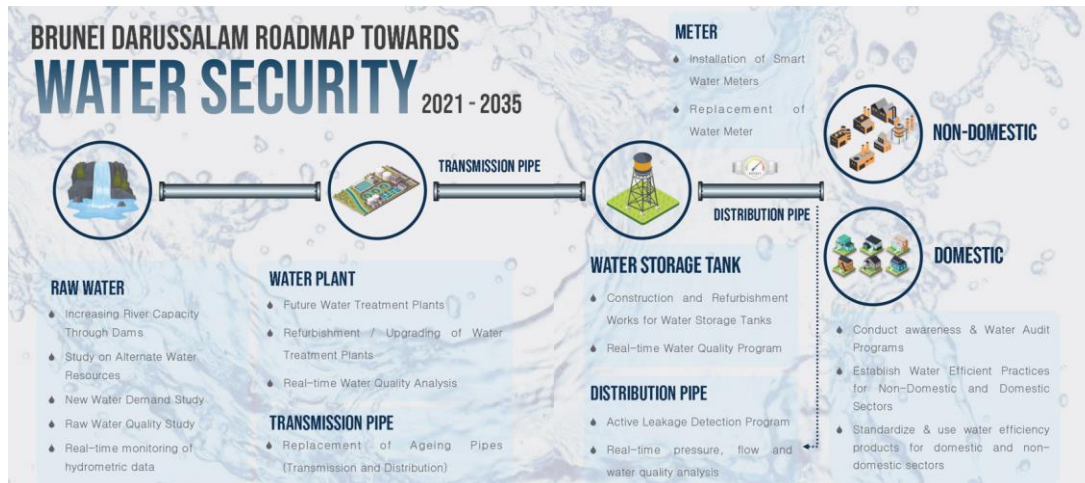


Figure 17 Brunei Darussalam Roadmap Towards Water Security 2021-2035
(Source: Towards Water Security Brunei Darussalam 2021-2035)

Ensuring Water Balance

Brunei Darussalam strives to ensure its water supply is weather resilient and can cater to future demands. A major part of the initiatives includes ensuring continuous water supply and resilience of water resources as well as managing water demand of domestic and non-domestic sectors.

Promoting sustainable behaviour patterns and practices is integral in access to clean and safe drinking water and sanitation, where MOD forecasted water demand will increase from 456 million litres per day (MLD) to 796 MLD by 2035. To support water conservation, awareness campaigns

have been conducted continuously in primary and secondary schools.

Brunei Darussalam has launched the Brunei Darussalam Water Efficient Products Labelling Scheme (BWELS) to encourage the installation of water-efficient products within the domestic and commercial markets, reducing the amount of potable water used. Altogether there are 47 water-fitting models from four sanitary wares companies registered in this scheme, informing consumers and suppliers alike to make conscious and sustainable decisions.

Efficient Water Management System

Brunei Darussalam is currently addressing national challenges in reducing its Non-Revenue Water (NRW) to improve the overall production efficiency of water treatment plants. To date, NRW has reduced between 50 per cent to as low as 33 per cent, showing a progressive trend towards a national target of 25 per cent by 2035.

In terms of production efficiency of water treatment plants, there are various programmes including upgrading and refurbishing the pipeline with a main objective to increase production capacity and river water quality study, which will provide useful analysis for the water treatment processes. To further improve water management, a locally-based Internet of Things (IoT) solutions provider has taken the lead in digitising various services and needs for efficient water management in Brunei Darussalam.

For example, sewage pumping stations are vigorously monitored for overflow or breakage through ultrasonic sensors in wells. Sensors are also used to solve various related infrastructure issues, such as detecting leaks, and monitoring water pressure and quality that supplies residents. To date, eleven gateways are already installed. However, one of the implementation challenges is that a larger infrastructure is required and a sustainable financial model to support refurbishments and maintenance. Unified Smart Metering System (USMS) started in October 2022 to reduce excessive water consumption while promoting responsible water use. USMS, a prepaid metering system, aims to merge building energy usage into one meter to improve revenue collection efficiency. The project is in its implementation phase, with 731 smart meters installed.

Addressing River Water Quality

Under the Water Quality Monitoring Program, water samplings from designated locations, including schools, mosques, community clinics and consumers' houses are tested routinely.

One of the initiatives identified to ensure that there is continuous supply of clean and safe drinking water is conducting real-time testing and analysis tracking short-term changes of water quality. Risk assessment programmes such as the water safety plan are conducted regularly. An action plan has been adopted in the Brunei Darussalam Towards

Water Security 2021-2035 strategic plan illustrating Brunei Darussalam's continuous commitment to sustainable water supply and access.

Legislative measures have been taken to deter and limit the dumping of illegal and hazardous waste into the rivers, including Control of Water Pollution Regulations. This is currently in the drafting stages that will be enacted in the near future. Other measures include the publication of the Marine Debris Clean Up Handbook and the Pollution Control Guidelines for Industrial Development.

Robust Sanitation Management

Currently, 94 per cent of the population has access to improved sanitation. Efforts to improve sanitation are focused on urban and developed built-up areas. The Government has also put in place various programmes, including operation and maintenance, upgrading and rehabilitation of sewerage infrastructure and assets within the 35 catchments in the country to ensure the robustness and continuity of sanitation facilities and services to the people. In particular, effluents from wastewater treatment plants are required to comply with strict

threshold limits so that the river ecosystem remains in a healthy condition.

The Government is exploring different areas in order to provide improved sanitation to every home and building in the country. Several of the identified key areas are the expansion of centralised sewerage in urban areas, nationwide update of sanitation data, more collaborations with stakeholders to improve the sewer system, and adoption of IoT towards a SMART Sewer Network.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is a need to continue to make improvements in ensuring all members of the population have access to safe and adequate sanitation facilities. There is also a need to address issues with water quality and identify its contributing factors. Lack of data and technical expertise poses a challenge in determining the true picture of the country's sustainable water systems and its transboundary waters. Brunei Darussalam continues to explore different mechanisms to address gaps in these areas.

There are, however, significant opportunities for the government and other stakeholders to take proactive action towards improving water quality. The Government continues to look into efforts such as developing and implementing more stringent regulations on industrial and agricultural activities to minimise the amount of pollutants released into waterways.

In addition, improving waste management practices and promoting recycling and composting can significantly reduce the amount of waste in water bodies, and further improving water quality. Through nationwide efforts, there has been a start of a Green movement in Brunei Darussalam with increased green-related activities, and zero-waste and low-impact living enterprises. The Government has the opportunity to leverage on this momentum and effect a bigger and deeper change.

Investing in technologies and infrastructure is another crucial opportunity that can lead to reduced pollution and improved water quality. Investments in green infrastructure, such as wetlands and riparian buffers, can effectively filter pollutants and protect water resources. By taking advantage of these opportunities, stakeholders can work towards improving water quality in Brunei Darussalam and ensuring sustainable water management practices.

FEATURE 6

Using Green Technologies for Drinking Water

RAB Global Green Sdn. Bhd. is a locally-owned business that provides eco-friendly and green solutions to local and international clients. It specialises in manufacturing renewable energy products and runs its daily operations from a net zero building. Its facilities are open to academics and researchers, which supports building the nation's capacity for green technologies and solutions.

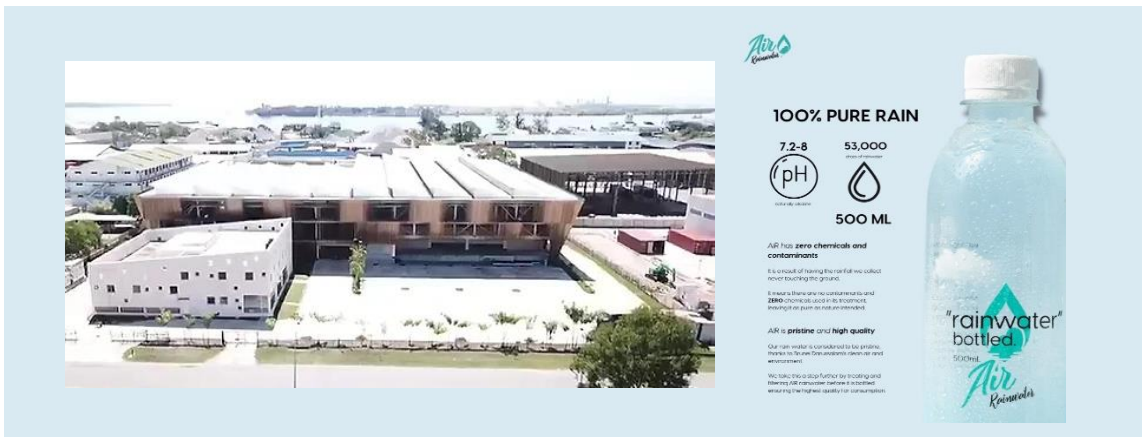
AIR Rainwater: RAB Global Green Sdn. Bhd.'s supports national efforts through the development of sustainably sourced drinking bottled water 'AIR Rainwater'. The product was developed by utilising the net zero building which has a catchment or harvesting mechanism designed to capture up to 900 metric tonnes of rainwater per hour. The facility oversees its manufacturing process end-to-end, from harvesting rainwater to packaging to having the final product on supermarket shelves. Optimising green efficiency, NRW from the production line will be used to run the business' daily operations.

This method of producing clean drinking water uses a sustainable and renewable water source, providing alternative methods to address challenges for a sustainable and secure water sector.

Driving for greener solutions for sustainable development challenges, the eco-friendly business has developed other renewable energy products that supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as below:

Coated Solar Panels: The firm developed a clean-energy product, solar panels that can be coated with customised design without compromising its functionality and efficiency.

Eco-friendly Fire Extinguishers: Using advanced technology, this innovative product is environmentally friendly, using chemicals that are non-pollutive to the atmosphere and soil. As well as being a green product, the product highlights its safety features, effectively and quickly eliminating heavy smoke.



RAB Global Green Sdn. Bhd. net zero facility with rainwater harvester design and AIR Rainwater bottled water



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7

Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam's power sector plays a key role behind driving the country's economic growth. With the objective for further industrial growth towards a resilient economic future, maintaining power accessibility and reliability is one of the key national strategies in supporting the country's developmental goals, while recognising the need to ensure sustainability.

The population of Brunei Darussalam continued to have access to electricity through a 99.9 per cent electrification rate in Brunei Darussalam. Indicators relating to renewable energy show some progress, and the indicator on energy intensity shown good progress made on energy efficiency and conservation efforts.

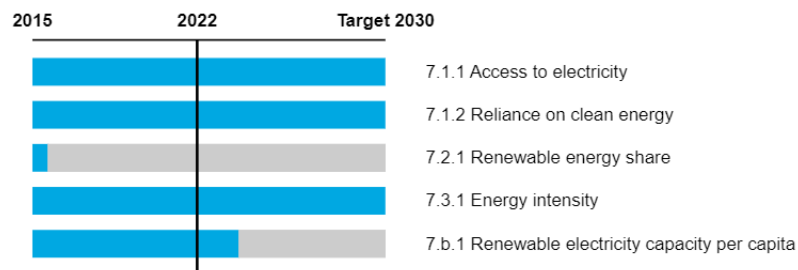


Figure 18 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 7

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Access to Electricity

A key aspect of accessibility to power includes its affordability for the population. Brunei Darussalam benefits from highly regulated energy prices, allowing the tariff and grid electricity cost generated by the national grid to be affordable at an average of USD 0.05/kwh for the residential sector. All four districts are integrated into the national grid by implementing connections along the Brunei-Muara to Temburong Bridge.

Installation of solar-powered street lights and solar panels in government buildings is also focused in Temburong District to promote the use of alternative energy sources. Alternative energy resources in the form of solar are also the country's solution for powering unreachable remote areas to ensure the population as a whole can enjoy electricity access.

Energy Efficiency and Reliability

Reliability of power services is a key pillar in ensuring high quality of life, including continued business activities contributing to economic growth are not hindered. On the supply side, efforts towards improving the generation efficiency of power plants are being continued through major maintenance

initiatives such as Long Term Service Agreements. Decommissioning of inefficient cycles to be replaced by efficient combined cycles will also result in better energy efficiency from Brunei Darussalam's power plants.

Digitalisation initiatives using SCADA technology will also contribute towards better power efficiency, allowing utilities to monitor activities across the grids and key power assets. The information and data gathered by this technology are important towards shaping initiatives for energy efficiency improvements, as well as improving energy services for reducing the frequency of power outages. Demand-side energy efficiency efforts include policies such as the Energy Efficiency (Standards and Labelling) Act (SLA), introduced in 2021 and 2022, to regulate electrical appliances in phases. With air-conditioning systems accounting for almost 60 per cent of electricity consumption in houses, government and commercial buildings, the Order

aims to start phasing out the import and sale of units that do not meet the set Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS). A Labelling Scheme using a star rating will also be introduced to guide and educate the public on relevant energy efficiency information. This Order will eventually include other appliances, such as refrigerators and lighting. The Electric Vehicles Joint Task Force (EVJTF) was established in 2019 to prepare short-term and long-term needs of Electric Vehicles (EVs) before the wide use of EVs in the future. The country's first retail rapid charging station was launched in 2022 to further support the transition towards clean and efficient energy usage.

Renewables and Energy Mix

Brunei Darussalam targets to install 200 MW of solar power by 2025 to diversify the base of power generation. The pioneer Tenaga Suria Brunei project based in Seria provides 1.2 MW of solar capacity to the national power grid. Brunei Shell Petroleum (BSP) launched a 3.3MW solar plant in 2021. These solar projects serve as a platform for capacity building to expand their skillsets in renewable energy. A bigger solar farm project to provide 30MW of solar in Sungai Akar is expected to be operational by the end of 2024. Several sites have been identified to build up 170 MW of solar to reach the 2025 target, and favourable PPP models are being planned to attract investments into these projects.

Floating solar panel technology is also being considered as part of the efforts to meet the national 200MW target for solar capacity by 2025. A number of bodies of water in Brunei Darussalam have been identified as ideal sites for installing floating solar farms. With such technology, preserving flora and fauna is possible and environmental sustainability can be ensured for future generations.

The Solar PV Guidebook was published in March 2022 to encourage renewable energy uptake among the public. The Guidebook serves as a reference on solar installations, net metering systems and the estimated cost of full solar systems. The net metering mechanism promotes the use of solar PVs in government buildings and residential houses, proving not only the feasibility of renewable energy technology but also its operationalisation among commercial and residential buildings. The current capacity generated through the Net Metering programme is about 298 kilowatt peak (kWp). Since its launch, the programme has saved around 387,000 kWh per year, with an estimated BND 33,000.00 worth of savings per year from both residential and government sectors.

Brunei Darussalam actively supports the exploration of other renewable options. Higher Education Institutions in Brunei Darussalam are carrying out studies on the feasibility of tidal energy as an alternative source of power generation. The introduction of new power generation sources plays a role in green industrial growth for the country, contributing further to Brunei Darussalam's efforts to diversify the country's economic base.

International and Regional Cooperation

Brunei Darussalam actively participates in international and regional cooperation platforms for the exchange of dialogue as well as capacity building in order to achieve Energy Transition.

Under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Brunei Darussalam participates in the annual meeting of the Renewable Energy Sub-Sector Network (RE-SSN) and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Sub-Sector Network (EEC-SSN).

The meeting discusses progress and capacity-building initiatives towards achieving the regional aspirational target to increase the component of renewable energy to 23 per cent by 2025 in the ASEAN Energy Mix, as well as the energy intensity reduction target to 32 per cent by 2025 based on the 2005 level under the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC).

At the ASEAN regional level, Brunei Darussalam also co-hosted the 4th East Asia Energy Forum titled 'A Low-Carbon Energy Transition in the ASEAN Region'. The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), the Energy Research Institute Network (ERIN), and the Department of Energy, Brunei Darussalam, organised the forum in 2021. Brunei Darussalam is also a member of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an

intergovernmental organisation mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy. The country has leveraged this platform through participation in IRENA-led workshops and seminars on deploying renewable energy.

A MOU between Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Singapore was signed in 2022, paving the way for cooperation between the two countries in the areas of Energy and Green Economy. Another MOU was signed in 2023 between the Department of Energy and ERIA for collaboration in energy cooperation. The two MOUs will enable further collaboration in research and the exchange of best practices in energy transition.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Energy demand in Brunei Darussalam is growing in tandem with increasing population and industrial development. Electricity demand in the industrial sector will grow, especially with the development of the downstream energy sector. The Hengyi Industries Refinery and Petrochemical projects' power requirement is also currently being met with coal power generation, which will be phased out by 2050. Even as the country moves towards the integration of renewable energy into the national grid, natural gas will continue to play a key role in achieving energy security in the power sector.

In meeting this energy demand growth, Brunei Darussalam is not excluded from the Energy Trilemma of balancing between Energy Security, Energy Affordability and Energy Sustainability. The highly regulated price in ensuring the affordability of power for Brunei Darussalam incurs government spending on fossil fuels, with natural gas as a main source of electricity generation. With the incorporation of renewables into the grid, the cost of power generation will change according to the prices of the relevant technology.

The integration of renewable sources, particularly solar, will pose stability issues to the grid, which in turn may affect the reliability of power supply to the population. In overcoming this, the integration of technology, such as energy storage systems, will be necessary. All these factors will play a role in pushing

up power generation costs and, therefore, government spending as well to reach an affordable price of power for the people.

To address this, tariff restructuring in order to reduce energy wastage and encourage energy savings is an initiative that the Government is exploring. To create market-driven and robust growth renewables, Brunei Darussalam aims to attract investment into this sector through PPP models, especially for renewable energy projects.

Favourable policies to provide a conducive environment for deploying renewable energy among major oil and gas industry players with large emissions are also a priority. As energy-intensive industries, these major players are encouraged to make renewables as the choice of generation source. At the same time, establishing policies for addressing fugitive, venting, and flaring emissions from the upstream and downstream sectors will also contribute to lowering emissions from the energy sector.

Brunei Darussalam is currently in discussion with UNESCAP to develop an energy transition roadmap for the country. This cooperation will strengthen efforts in deploying renewable energy and achieving energy efficiency through training courses and facilitating workshops.

FEATURE 7

Brunei Darussalam's Solar Projects

Brunei Darussalam has a target to increase the share of renewable energy to at least 30 per cent of total power generation capacity mix.

The Tenaga Suria Brunei (TSB) located in Seria was opened in 2010 to promote the use of clean energy in Brunei Darussalam as part of the country's clean and energy mix strategy. The farm has precisely 9,234 solar panels with a nominal capacity of 1.2 kWp and covers an area of nearly 12,000 square meters. The farm can generate 1,344 megawatt-hours of electricity per year, or enough to power about 200 households. That equates to 47 solar panels for each home. The farm is expected to save approximately 340,000 litres of crude oil and reduce 960 tonnes of carbon monoxide emission annually, equivalent to the CO₂ absorption power of 260 hectares of forest.

The plant site also acts as an educational platform for interested students and researchers as a way for raising awareness on clean energy technology and sources. It also aims to invigorate young minds on the benefits of clean energy sector and renewable energy sources. In 2020, Department of Energy, Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with Mitsubishi corporation organised the Environment Education Tour programme with support from NGO Green Brunei where a total of 1,070 students visited the site.

Following TSB, the second Flagship Solar PV (photovoltaic) Plant was opened by Brunei Shell Petroleum (BSP) on 6 April 6 2021 with 7,000 solar panels installed in its facility across four hectares of land. The plant has a capacity of 3.3 MWp and capable of generating electricity equivalent to around 600 households per year. Electricity generated from the solar plant will be used to power BSP Head Office.

Brunei Darussalam continues to build on this strategy with the planning of three solar farms by 2025. The proposed Kampong Sungai Akar Solar Farm is expected to be the largest in the country, generating 30 MW of solar energy. In the mid-term, Brunei Darussalam aims to generate 100 MW of solar energy by 2025 as part of the nation's pledge to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions by 20 per cent over the next 10 years.



Aerial view of the TSB plant



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 8

Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam continues to strive towards a dynamic and sustainable economy and thus, much efforts has been made, including initiatives to support the creation of employment and ensure its conduciveness.

The introduction of Brunei Darussalam Economic Blueprint, supporting Goal 3 of the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, in combination with the industry roadmap and the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025 has acted as a pathway for the country to reach its aspirations.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the country's economy, specifically in terms of trade and local employment. Despite a lower labour productivity growth rate, the overall trend in Goal 8 shows more progress towards economic growth. Unemployment rate for Brunei Darussalam recorded a decline of 7.3 per cent in 2020 to 4.9 per cent in 2021⁷. However, the increasing number of people categorised as 'outside of labour force' such as individuals who are not actively looking for a job and are not readily available for employment, e.g. students, housewives, retirees and senior citizens, as well as the number of youths not in education, employment or training (NEET), remain a concern.

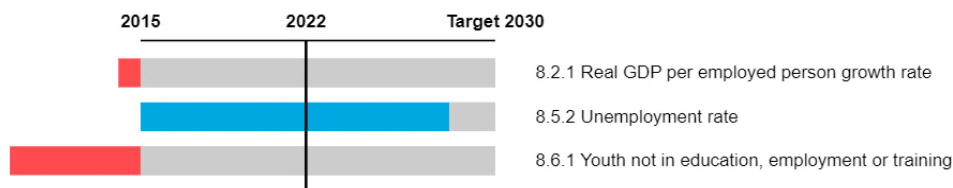


Figure 19 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 8

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Economic Growth

Brunei Darussalam's economy is gradually moving towards diversification, although it is still dominated by the Oil and Gas sector, which makes up 52.7 per cent of GDP in 2022. Non-Oil and Gas, however, has shown a significant improvement, mostly attributed to an increase in the Downstream Oil and Gas sector, such as the production of methanol as well as petroleum and chemical products, with the Brunei Fertilizer Industries only recently entering the scene in 2022.

In 2022, the industry sector is the largest contributor to the country's GDP, with 66.9 per cent share to the GDP by production, followed by the services sector at 32.0 per cent and 1.1 per cent by the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector⁸.

In terms of MSMEs' growth, the number of MSMEs increased by 2.2 per cent per annum from 5,248 in 2015 to 5,853 enterprises in 2020⁹.

⁷ Labour Force Survey 2021, Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy

⁸ Gross Domestic Product Q4 and Annual 2022 Report, Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy

⁹ Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy

The establishment of DARE further accelerated the pace of the MSMEs' growth by providing training programmes and financing schemes. Since 2016, a total of 15,000 entrepreneurs have been assisted through entrepreneurship training programmes.

DARE also provides and manages 27 industrial sites and four ready-built factories in all four districts to provide businesses with building spaces to carry out their manufacturing activities or expand their production at an affordable rate.

Human Capital Development

Towards building resilient and sustainable human capital with industry-ready capabilities, Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) was established to address unemployment-related issues, effectively and efficiently. To support this agenda, MPEC has developed several programmes and initiatives to address skills mismatch as well as to support upskilling and reskilling of the workforce such as the i-Ready Apprenticeship Programme, SkillsPlus, and SPIN in Accountancy.

Initiatives to align and build a marketable and employable labour supply with the skills and qualifications required by the industries are being done under a steering body called the Manpower Industry Steering Committee (MISC), which enables a tripartite collaboration between industry players, regulators and education and training institutions. Currently, the MISC covers five identified critical sectors which are: i) Hospitality and Tourism; ii) Information and Communication Technology; iii) Transportation and Logistics; iv) Energy; and v) Construction.

Apart from the formal sectors, Brunei Darussalam is seeing a growing trend on the informal sector. In 2021, there is an increase in total informal employment from 91,300 in 2019 to 100,100¹⁰. More than three-quarters of local informal employment (83.0 per cent or 38,000 persons) were concentrated in the services sector, mainly in wholesale and retail trade activities. Whilst informal sector plays an important role in employment creation and flexibility, factors such as social protection, income inequality and security may also be need to be taken into consideration.

For policymakers and employers, the ever-evolving nature of work, including shifts in informal and formal employment, highlights the importance of adapting and adjusting workforce policies to current needs. This is crucial to ensure their relevance, resilience, and inclusivity, while also maximising productivity and safeguarding the well-being of the workforce.

Decent Employment

The recent publication of the Salary Guidelines by MPEC provided a national reference on a standardised range of salary scales for selected job positions that can be used to set and offer competitive salary packages.

The country is also conscious of the importance of mental well-being in workplaces as it contributes to a person's job accomplishment and thereby drives their productivity. As such, the government is in the process of developing its first official policy on work-life balance as part of the National Mental Health Action Plan for 2022-2025 (MHAP). The policy would include the need to revise days off, standardised working hours, the need to practice flexible working hours and an option to work from home, provision

of day care or crèche facilities at workplaces, and others. In support of leaving no one behind and creating a more inclusive society, assisting disabled persons with employment continues to be an important economic agenda. Efforts include the development of accessibility requirements for people with disabilities and considerations for their well-being and welfare.

In addition, the Manpower Blueprint which is currently being finalised will also act as a national guideline towards creating a more productive and efficient economy by aligning workforce skills with the needs of the private sector, leading to better business outcomes and increased job opportunities for workers.

¹⁰ Labour Force Survey 2021, Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is a need to make more progress toward Brunei Darussalam's economic diversification agenda, particularly in increasing the share of non-Oil and Gas sector. The domination of the Oil and Gas sector in the country's GDP makes the country to be highly susceptible to high uncertainties in the global energy market. Over the long term, a decline in global demand for fossil fuels, added with the transition to net zero carbon emission to limit climate change, will further put pressure on the country's economic development.

With the latest ratification of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), it will help Brunei Darussalam enhance its attractiveness for foreign direct

investments (FDI) and tap into new trading opportunities and markets such as Canada and Latin American countries. Nurturing new growth areas will help foster economic resilience and strengthen Brunei Darussalam's economy in the long run.

At the same time, tackling unemployment issues and NEET also remains the country's concern which calls for intensification of the whole-of-nation approach in the creation of new quality jobs. In addition, there is a need for increased focus on addressing the job demand and supply mismatch, as well as strengthening upskilling and reskilling programmes for the workforce to remain relevant in the labour market.

FEATURE 8

Supporting Entrepreneurship

Numerous initiatives are carried out to support entrepreneurship, especially for the youth.



The Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (YEE) Handbook:

The handbook was developed in 2022 to guide youth entrepreneurs in deciding the suitable scheme and programme for their businesses. The ecosystem comprises of Capacity Building and Shared Support Services, Financing, Infrastructure and Facilities, Business Opportunities, and Market Access initiatives. Other than co-matching grants and mentorship, the YEE initiatives include the Standards Consultancy Programme which help businesses get certified internationally and earn the provision of ready-built factories for manufacturing businesses.

i-Usahawan: This youth entrepreneurship development programme was developed to help young start-ups secure contracts offered by clients from the Government agencies, Government Linked Companies and Statutory Bodies as well as Corporate Organisations.

Shell LiveWIRE Brunei: This is a social investment flagship programme of BSP, which was established to support infrastructure for enterprise development as a long-term sustainable economic development. One of its focus areas is to build the capacity in entrepreneurship and business management systems through collaborations with academic institutions, online platforms and public engagements. Shell LiveWIRE offers workshops and training courses such as Higher Institution Entrepreneurship Program (HIEP), putting on masterclasses on topics such as Business Model Canvas, Bright Ideas, and Business Plan Series.

National Youth Day: To celebrate the achievements of the youth, Brunei Darussalam holds the National Youth Day annually in August, presenting awards such as the Excellent Youth award, Youth Service award, Young Youth Leaders award, and Excellent Project for Youth award.

The following are some of the success stories:

Sphiere Sdn. Bhd.: An IT and Digitalization based micro company whose services specialise in developing mobile applications, websites, software, and graphic design where they identify their customers' problem statements and provide IT digitalised solutions. In August 2022, Sphiere Sdn. Bhd. launched a tree-planting mobile application called Atmosphere, where they hosted a Tree Planting event to commemorate the milestone. The application encourages the public to contribute to the reforestation and afforestation of Brunei Darussalam by subscribing to a tree-planting service or volunteering to plant trees. The concept for the tree-planting mobile application was born out of a collaboration between Shell LiveWIRE Brunei, the Forestry Department, the Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe), and the Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS). In October 2022, Sphiere Sdn. Bhd. signed a landmark agreement with BSP to develop a greenhouse gas emission monitoring and visualisation application for BSP operations.

ONZ: It is a pickup and delivery service brand that forms part of Rotuku Group of Companies (RGO) Sdn. Bhd, providing logistics and digital solutions for faster and smoother fulfilment services. ONZ enables businesses to gain ease of growth and sustainability for individuals needing items delivered to their doorstep. In addition, ONZ Delivery also offers e-Commerce integration for businesses that wants a platform for direct consumer purchases. ONZ has since garnered accolades such as winning second place in BICTA 2018 and was selected as one of the finalists for a pitch in Singapore to raise investment for their business through DARE Accelerate Startup Programme. As of today, ONZ has employed a total of 416 local employees, a mixture of part-timers and full-time delivery drivers.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 9

Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation and Foster Innovation

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The nation continues to invest in building resilient infrastructure and fostering innovative technologies to improve quality of life, support economic activities and ensure sustainable development. Physical and people-to-people connectivity has continuously improved to provide equitable access for all. Efforts have been intensified post-COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the logistics sector and promoting research activities and innovation.

Brunei Darussalam is on track to meet its targets under Goal 9. Manufacturing activities have increased, specifically in the downstream industry, contributing to a rise in employment. Brunei Darussalam has reduced its CO2 emission per unit of manufacturing value added as part of its Net Zero 2050 commitment. As part of the country’s Smart Nation aspirations, at least 99 per cent of the country’s population has access to mobile cellular networks. However, indicator 9.1.2 has shown a regressive trend due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

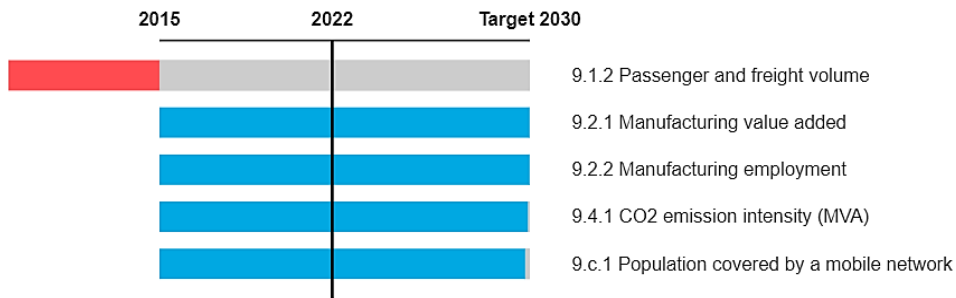


Figure 20 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 9

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Resilient Infrastructure for Better Connectivity

Through the 11th National Development Plans (*Rancangan Kemajuan Negara* or RKN11), many national projects focused on upgrading the existing infrastructure to ensure the delivery of high quality, reliable and sustainable infrastructure. One of the completed major development projects was the Sultan Haji Omar ‘Ali Saifuddien Bridge in 2020, which enables the facilitation of inter-district communication and brought various development to the previously cut off Temburong District from the rest of Brunei Darussalam by the Brunei Bay.

In terms of air connectivity, Brunei International Airport has been affected in terms of revenue loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where only two airlines operated, and the others were suspended temporarily due to low load factors. There was a total of 47,735 passengers in 2021, compared to 422,851 in 2020 and 2,148,761 in 2019. Air freight record a decrease from 30,409 metric tonnes in 2019 and 9,729 Metric tonnes in 2020 to 6,985 metric tonnes in 2021. This has improved in 2022, where a total of 554,913 passengers and 10,926 metric tonnes of air freight have been recorded¹¹.

¹¹ Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications

With the resumption of airline operations in several destinations and uplifted restrictions on inbound and outbound international travelers, Brunei Darussalam expects further growth of passenger and cargo movements by 60 per cent in 2025. Brunei International Airport aims to improve its capability to accommodate wide-body aircraft through the rehabilitation of the pavement runway phase 2 project. The project is expected to be completed by 2025.

The country is also enhancing its port industry among which, through the Muara Port Company (MPC), Brunei Darussalam is doubling its capacity to accommodate increased future volume from local industries and international cargoes. Quay length would be expanded from 250 metres to 500 metres to accommodate two vessels at a time, increasing port capacity to handle 500,000 TEUs from 250,000 TEUs per annum by 2026. Additionally, Brunei Fertilisers Industries (BFI) has partnered with MPC, to manage the end-to-end logistics solution to transport urea from Sungai Liang Industrial Park to Muara Port to cater to larger bulk carrier vessels of up to 60,000 deadweight tonnages (DWT). By exporting through Muara Port, BFI could deploy larger vessels for exports to markets such as India, Australia, Latin America, the United States, and other major customers. MPC has also taken over operations of BFI's terminal in Sungai Liang Industrial Park, which can accommodate smaller vessels up to 9,000 DWT.

Another landmark project that marks the country's development milestone was the Pulau Muara Besar (PMB) Bridge that connects the PMB Industrial Park to Serasa. The project was awarded the ASEAN Outstanding Engineering Achievement Project Award at the 39th Conference of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisation in 2021 (CAFEO 39). The PMB Bridge Project was completed in May 2018, and the bridge part is 2.68 kilometers long. It is a dual-carriageway bridge that connects PMB to the mainland, which has facilitated the development of the petrochemical-related industry on the island and ultimately contributes towards the social and economic development of the nation.

The most significant recent downstream project development is the full commercial operation of the PMB Refinery and Petrochemical Plant in 2019. This includes a deep-sea container port development and industrial facilities catering to Petrochemical and Downstream Oil and Gas industries. The upgrading of Serasa Industrial Road heading to the PMB bridge also serves to facilitate accessibility to the industry and generate further spin-off activities in the fish landing complex, processing industry and research conducted by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism.

In terms of strengthening the country's digital transformation, since the consolidation of its telecommunication infrastructure under the Unified National Networks (UNN), as of 2022, about 80 per cent of mobile telecommunication infrastructure has been optimised and modernised. This aims to improve the country's mobile coverage using a new technology called Mobile Shared Radio Access Network (RAN) thus achieving cost effectiveness, with lowered future costs of operation and maintenance. This strategy started at the beginning of 2020 and is expected to be completed at the end of 2024. By 2022, the proportion of the population with mobile network coverage is close to achieving 100 per cent. There is a steady improvement in both 3G and 4G coverage in Brunei Darussalam with 99.2 per cent of its population are covered within the mobile network. The wide coverage is the result of the consolidation of telecommunication infrastructure under the UNN.

Looking ahead, Brunei Darussalam has started to look into enhancing the country's internet connectivity by implementing infrastructure changes to accommodate 5G network coverage. Relevant agencies have also been working together to increase capacity for 5G-internet use in the population, including establishing a 5G Lab with UTB and organising 5G: Enabling Digital Transformation Seminar for the public. Currently in its implementation phase, the 5G coverage is expected to cover 90 per cent of the population. As well as improvements to infrastructure, building the nation's digital capacity especially among the youths, have been given a focus. Programmes such as BICTA Plus Bootcamp and Go Digital ASEAN aimed at enhancing the digital capacity and interconnectedness of the people of Brunei Darussalam, will go hand-in-hand with the wide mobile coverage.

Fostering Science, Technology, and Innovation

The establishment of the Council for Research and the Advancement of Technology, and Science (CREATES) in 2021 helps to further support the development and growth of activities related to Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in Brunei Darussalam. The CREATES Secretariat has started the work on the National STI framework designed to support national development by ensuring all STI activities are aligned to *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, Brunei Darussalam Economic Blueprint, and national strategic plans.

One of the projects funded by CREATES is 'Immunogenicity of COVID-19 Vaccines and Levels of SARS COV 2 Neutralising Antibody in the Bruneian Population', which is a project under Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). This project is in collaboration with MOH, Duke NUS Medical School Singapore and Evid Technology. The project aims to assess the level of neutralising antibodies (NABs) generated by Sinopharm, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines in the vaccinated population. This initiative is in support of enhancing scientific research and upgrading the technical capabilities of the country.

CREATES Funding Scheme specifically opens for Brunei-based Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs), Brunei-based Research Institutes (RIs), Government agencies (subject to collaboration with IHLs or RIs), Non-profit organisations (subject to collaboration with IHLs or RIs) and Private Sectors. To improve the country's data related to R&D, CREATES Secretariat utilises OECD Frascati Manual to guide on collecting R&D statistics to capture STI-related R&D data in Brunei Darussalam.

Similarly, the newly launched Brunei Innovation Lab (BIL) in July 2022 was aimed to help Brunei Darussalam's digital aspirations, for technopreneurs to elevate their ideas to the next level. BIL develops the eco-system by creating capacity building programmes, identifying market and funding opportunities, forging collaborations amongst stakeholders and the wider technology community, and increasing awareness of the use of new technologies to the wider public.

The Brunei ICT Awards (BICTA) has gained an increase in the number of participations over the years, with a 28 per cent increase for BICTA 2022. Following BICTA 2022, Brunei Darussalam participated in the Asia Pacific ICT Alliance (APICTA) Awards 2022, whereby Brunei Darussalam submitted six entry nominations and won two Winner Awards and two Merit Awards.

To encourage innovation and more participation in the BICTA competition, BICTA awards categories will be reviewed for BICTA 2023 onwards. While the challenges often ensure the continuity of the BICTA participants, there is a need to further strengthen post-BICTA activities to ensure participants can continuously enhance their product development and gain commercial value.

In relation to system development, the local researchers at the Center for Transport Research (CfTR), UTB, have developed a system called Road Accident Data Development and Enhancement (RADED). RADED is a centralised and integrated national road accident database system that aims to improve the road accident data collection process through a web-based system to record, store, retrieve, present, and analyse road accident data. This allows MTIC to monitor road accidents data collection in the country. RADED was fully operationalised on 1 January 2021 and can also be accessed through an application to enable the recording of traffic accident information at the accident site. Further improvement plans to the system include data analytics and data on vehicular fire.

Efforts to foster innovation in Brunei Darussalam is further supported by academia, universities and higher institutions through their research studies and projects promoting sustainable development. Between 2019 and 2022, UBD reported that a total of 2,012 research publications were released where Goal 3 and Goal 9 have the highest number of publications with 386 and 197 studies respectively. For example, under Goal 3, research efforts were conducted jointly between higher institutions and MOH with a total of 61 collaborative projects. There are opportunities to enhance this effort through increased funding for R&D, and closer consultative partnerships between research academies and relevant implementing agencies.

Another move towards innovation is the development of the utility system known as the Unified Smart Metering System (USMS). With this system, every household will be able to monitor and manage their electricity and water usage online, and able to reload their utilities consumption through

various options such as mobile apps, DST Easi Credit, third party Top-Ups, any USMS authorised resellers or via counter channels throughout the four districts. This system is expected to act as a catalyst for other smart initiatives and bring greater economic and social development opportunities.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although Brunei Darussalam has a relatively high global ranking in some areas of technology adoption such as the use of mobile, internet and social media, its rankings related to innovation remain further behind. There is a need for the country to advance the development of innovation and technopreneurship that includes cultivating a strong entrepreneurial culture to promote innovation and spur an open exchange of ideas, especially among the youth. The cooperation and collaboration between all stakeholders play a significant role in building the ecosystem needed for innovation, such as the government, industries, financial institutions,

and education and research institutions. There is also a need to further build a skilled workforce to drive the development related to science and technology.

Considering the importance of innovation and R&D progress in a country's development, one of the main challenges faced is the collection and quality of data. In order to understand its current progress as well as understand the areas for development, the data collection and management need to be further improved to cover data from industries, and not just be limited to government data.

FEATURE 9

Brunei Innovation Lab

Brunei Innovation Lab (BIL) was formed in July 2022 in collaboration between key industries namely BSP, Shell LiveWIRE Brunei, Datastream Digital (DST), and DARE. By creating an integrated and innovative ecosystem, BIL looks to increase the country's pipeline of innovative solutions and technology businesses, and thus supporting the country's aspiration to be a Smart Nation through its Digital Economy Masterplan 2025, driven by the Digital Economy Council. Central to the masterplan is a focus on developing and adopting digital systems and technologies across the government, economy, and wider society. This includes creating capacity building programmes, identifying market and funding opportunities, forging collaborations amongst stakeholders and the wider technology community, and increasing awareness of the use of new technologies to the wider public.

Projects focus on new and emerging technology: BIL focuses on ten new and emerging technology areas: Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Automation, Blockchain, Cloud Computing, Data Analytics, Digital Twin, Internet of Things (IoT), Additive Manufacturing, and Cybersecurity. Several projects are in the midst of prototyping stage with key champions and technopreneurs working in the area of greenhouse gas emission monitoring to utilising a variety of IoT devices and alternative energy sources for precision agricultural usage and mapping of potential solar energy efficiency and energy output in residential housing estate areas towards a cleaner green energy generation.

Building a local workforce with the needed skills: The impact of the adoption of digitalisation in various industries has the potential to spur the creation of new jobs. BIL is working with its ecosystem partners by working hand-in-hand with the MISC for the ICT sector to identify the skills and new competencies to ensure our local workforce is future-ready.

Raising awareness and harnessing talents: BIL continues to raise awareness and harness more interest in start-ups within Brunei Darussalam's talent pool to participate in the innovation journey. To build digital technology skills, BIL and its ecosystem partners are also looking to provide digital and technology training and development programmes that aim to equip individuals with the necessary digital skills, as well as holistic development, in strengthening their business acumen and entrepreneurship. BIL is seeking for opportunities to partner with academic institutions via an open digital learning platform to create awareness and raise understanding of the ten emerging technology areas among students.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 10

Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam remains unwavering in its commitment to reducing inequalities. The country strategises to enhance equity amongst different groups by focusing on areas such as education and health, as well as ensuring a robust welfare system. With its population of 440,000 people, Brunei Darussalam utilises a community-based approach to close the wealth disparity in rural and urban areas through charity drives and advocacy work. The whole-of-nation approach enables the bridging of gaps, including the continuous efforts by NGOs in reaching out to the marginalised communities and engendering impact.

There has been notable improvement observed in the labour income share of GDP, where the total compensation of employees and the labour income of the self-employed has increased. In terms of supporting the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, Brunei Darussalam observed a decrease in the proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff, compared to the 2015 baseline.

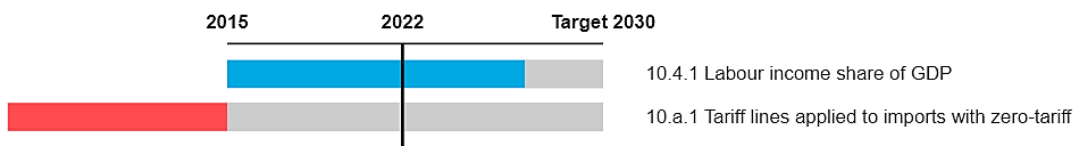


Figure 21 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 10

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Tackling Income Inequality

The country continues to ensure that those in need particularly vulnerable individuals such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), underprivileged individuals, senior citizens and the minorities are afforded equal rights and opportunities in building better lives, and can participate fully in society.

Specifically, securing full-time employment is essential to tackle income inequality. Through a whole-of-nation approach, various NGOs and government agencies work together to provide opportunities for the underprivileged individuals and entrepreneurs.

As an example, MPEC's initiative focuses on providing support to help vulnerable individuals transition into employment. The launch of Salary Guidelines through MPEC with the support of Department of Labour, Ministry of Home Affairs also serves as a reference on the salary scale that is recommended for the identified job positions at the private sector, especially the starting point of each career. One community example is Tunas Project, a collaboration between MOHA and Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD). The project focuses on facilitating small businesses by providing a marketplace to encourage trade.

Social Welfare

The Government ensures the social welfare of the people to be the highest priority and assistance continues to be given to certain groups of the community including PWDs, senior citizens, and the underprivileged through JAPEM.

In 2020, policies under welfare programmes were reviewed and adjusted to ensure that they align with the present-day situation. Economic growth allows higher fiscal provisions on national programmes that delivers national visions especially in areas promoting equity such as employment, health, education services, and unemployment benefits.

There is a global downward trend where labour share income in 35 advanced economies fell from around 54 per cent in 1980 to 50.5 per cent in 2014¹². Brunei Darussalam is no exception to this as there was a 0.7 per cent decline compared to 2004 (51.7 per cent). Brunei Darussalam is currently working on setting a target to maintain labour share of GDP. A high labour share of GDP indicate a healthy economy with steady growth, low inequality and loss of consumer purchasing power. Maintaining good progress on indicator 10.4.1 is essential to achieving Goal 10.

Community-Based Approach: Caring for Each Other

Giving back to the community in a time of crisis became a priority for volunteers as they dedicated their time and energy to prepare and deliver food rations provided by the Government to people under the Quarantine Order during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food distribution centres were supported by volunteers from government agencies and the youth. The food drive missions involved sorting and assembling food packs and delivering them to those undergoing quarantine periods, which included seniors and foreigners in the country. Donations from the general public varied from food to household and personal care items were also received and distributed to the families in need as well as front liners who were assisting MOH.

The Youth Volunteers COVID-19 Task Force (Sukarelawan Belia COVID-19) in collaboration with the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent and supported by MCYS, the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) under MOHA, and MOH held a drive-through donation campaign that allowed the public to contribute food items or cleaning materials for underprivileged families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributors nationwide, comprising government and private agencies as well as the public, came forward to make the campaign a success.

On 7 August 2022, during the 16th National Youth Day celebration, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam launched the Mengalinga App, a platform for people to register as volunteers; for organisations to offer programmes; and directory for NGOs in Brunei Darussalam. This is a collaboration between MCYS, Baiduri Bank, UTB's students, and Nextacloud (a youth company).

As part of welfare reforms and to assist those in need, corporate bodies also step forward to lend a helping hand. BIBD, for example, launched a Community for Brunei online platform designed to support MSMEs as well as to raise funds through NGOs. This initiative enables members of the public to donate to those in need including medical front liners, underprivileged, elders, and low-income foreign workers, while at the same time protecting the livelihoods of the local MSMEs.

Other donation campaigns included Fundraising for the Underprivileged Elderly, Campaign for the Underprivileged Communities, COVID-19 Donation Centre, Projek #INFAQ1 and Community Pantry Campaign.

¹² Manyika, James, et al. (2019, May). *A new look at the declining labor share of income in the United States*. McKinsey Global Institute.

Ensure Equality during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ensuring the safety of the people in Brunei Darussalam against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government officially kickstarted the National Vaccination Programme for COVID-19 in April 2021. Vaccines are free and readily available to all residents including expatriates and migrant workers in the country, where utilisation of the mobile application, *BruHealth* help in managing the related processes. As of March 2023, the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme saw more than 79 per cent of the population vaccinated against COVID-19 with three doses. As an initiative to ensure no individuals or groups are left behind in the fight against COVID-19, MOH runs a mobile vaccination service reaching out to residents in remote areas. Vaccination centres were also set up across the country to increase accessibility.

The pandemic and health measures have severely affected businesses, particularly MSMEs. Numerous assistance measures were introduced by the government to support the businesses, such as introduction of interim policies. Businesses of all scales are required to make contributions to Employees Trust Fund and Supplementary Contributory Pension at a fixed percentage.

During this period, businesses, especially MSMEs were permitted to defer these payments for six months. MSMEs with fewer than 100 employees were given subsidisation to aid in keeping their employees on payroll, and ensure their well-being, especially the vulnerable people. Other similar initiatives implemented to help relieve financial pressures stifling the business community during the global pandemic included subsidisation for rent and utility bills, and tax exemptions or discounts.

At the height of lockdowns and travel restrictions during the global COVID-19 pandemic, more than 40 per cent of employed persons experienced changes in their working conditions including fewer working hours, and working away from their usual workplace. The 2021 Labour Force Survey reported that for the unemployed in 2021, 2.6 per cent or 300 persons were among those who had jobs in 2020 but were no longer working. Financial assistance was afforded to those in need specifically people with fewer shifts or working hours, loss of employment and self-employed freelancers. The Government continuously ensure people's welfare is secured in the fight against COVID-19.

Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

Implemented and enacted in October 2021, the Government launched landmark orders to protect vulnerable groups; i) Persons with Disabilities Act Chapter 234; and ii) Old Age Pensions and Disability Allowances Chapter 18. The new Order and Act address issues posing significant challenges to disabled people, the ageing population including education, employment, financial support and seclusion. Changes were made to provide increased financial support to households (Care Provider Allowance) where a spouse or parent provides unpaid care to a family member with high care needs. These new laws will protect PWDs and senior citizens by imposing severe penalties if convicted of aggravated abuse and/or negligence.

These provisions are part of the government's plans to protect its most vulnerable citizens while also showing the country's commitment to leaving no group behind in its national development plans or efforts. Since the establishment of these orders, an additional 3,800 applications have been received and to date, 2,756 persons have been verified as PWDs and subsequently registered in the National Registration for PWDs. This helps to increase the visibility of vulnerable people in mainstream society.

NGOs such as *The Impian Project*, a PWD-advocacy group, supports the development of PWDs through organising awareness-raising campaigns and holding forums and seminars with other advocates both at home and overseas to increase public understanding of persons with different abilities and promote greater inclusivity for PWDs in the country.

In 2018, MOD issued the Different Abilities Design Guidelines under the Building Control Order to ensure that all buildings provide conducive facilities and access for these sectors of the population. The guidelines provide a list of objectives and requirements for mosques, government offices,

commercial premises and other types of buildings to be designed with access routes prepared for PWDs including older persons who may have limited movement as well as creating more inclusive universal design concepts such as child-friendly toilets and lactation rooms for nursing mothers.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Brunei Darussalam continues to put priority on ensuring greater equality, especially for vulnerable groups. The focus remains on ensuring accessibility to resources and services as well as creating equal opportunities.

Awareness campaigns should be continued to increase people's understanding of the issue and thereby increase their engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic caused some national initiatives to be temporarily suspended to ensure the safety and well-being of the population, such as the Braillethon and White Cane Day Charity Run. However, it also

brought opportunities to explore other methods to conduct activities to increase greater accessibility and participation from all parts of society, such as through virtual means.

A whole-of-nation approach should also be continued in addressing inequality. Through this approach, stakeholders could share knowledge and resources, leverage expertise and networks, and thus, develop key strategies to tackle inequality, towards creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

FEATURE 10

NGOs Supporting Underprivileged Families

Projek FEED

Projek FEED is a social enterprise that focuses on helping underprivileged families in Brunei Darussalam to generate their own income through skills training and home businesses. They provide mentoring, skills training, business monitoring, and assistance to families until they can earn profitable income independently. In 2020, the ASEAN Business Council awarded Projek FEED with ASEAN Business Award in Inclusive Business.

Some of the key projects are as follows:

FEED Mentoring Programme: Through the programme, participants will be supported in identifying their skills, and undergo mentoring sessions, such as in business planning, marketing, profit calculation and risk management. The participants will also be provided with an opportunity to receive micro-funding for their businesses. Throughout the programme, the participants will be assisted by mentors who are business owners, who mostly come from similar background, motivational speakers, spiritual motivators and academicians.

Village Empowerment Programme: The initiative creates a grass-cutting service in a village with the aim to provide jobs for the underprivileged individuals in respective villages. It started in January 2020 and now caters to four villages.

Society for Community Outreach & Training

The Society for Community Outreach & Training (SCOT) was established in May 2011, with the mission to be a catalyst for sustainable poverty alleviation in Brunei Darussalam. SCOT acts as a bridge by introducing sustaining methods and strategies to help the underprivileged communities, and assistance in the form of resources, basic skills and support to help them move out of the poverty cycle.

Some of the key projects are as follows:

Social Kitchen Community Project: Social Kitchen is an initiative established in 2019 that aims to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for underprivileged families, specifically women by facilitating the selling of home-cooked meals. It is a charity programme that empowers women and mothers to improve their economic standing and participation. It also enables women to partake in activities that aims to alleviate poverty in their community, promoting active citizen participation in charitable efforts. The project was impactful during the COVID-19 pandemic, where 3,500 meals were distributed to underprivileged communities through various activities. This effort was further supported by other sectors ranging from private firms and charity organisations as well as from the public in the form of donations.

KADAI RUNCIT.com: The KADAI RUNCIT initiative is a spin-off of SCOT's flagship programme Social Kitchen that supports single mothers through selling of their products via a digital platform during the period of COVID-19 pandemic. The platform enables customers to purchase packed meals to be donated to frontline workers at a time of national hardship. During this period, the initiative saw orders being placed up to 60 packs per day where proceeds go to the women entrepreneurs.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11

Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam is experiencing increased economic activity, urbanisation and a growing population. Goal 11 becomes an important goal for Brunei Darussalam to deliver in ensuring Brunei Darussalam remains safe, prosperous and accessible to all.

National masterplans and action plans have been developed to advance this goal, particularly, the ambition to provide for adaptive, resilient and sustainable development. In relation to progress in the SDG indicators, indicator 11.6.2 shows healthy progress in reducing the presence of urban particulate matter in Brunei Darussalam's air space.

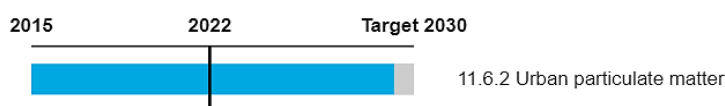


Figure 22 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 11

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Sustainable Urban Planning and Land Use

The National Land Use Master Plan (NLUMP) 2006-2025 was prepared as part of the Ministry of Development Strategic Plan 2018-2023 that provides a national spatial framework to guide and coordinate the country's overall land use allocation, conservation and development needs of the country. NLUMP highlights four key strategies for high land use utilisation including reviewing policies, strengthening enforcement, stronger alignment to *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and utilising data for land use planning.

The government considers the allocation of land supply and manages different land use practices. Programmes such as Urban Footprint Area consolidates existing urban areas in the country to create a more compact urban area. Other policies have been reviewed to optimise sustainable development, including increasing plot ratio, density and reducing building lines within Urban Footprint Areas and infill development. NLUMP is continuously revisited and reviewed to ensure Brunei Darussalam's adaptability and resilience in the face of a changing world.

Additionally, Brunei Darussalam aims to promote green living spaces by recommending a 10 per cent green space for all developments, domestic and commercial. The publication of the Tree Planting Handbook and Green Protocol has helped promote green living spaces and reforestation.

The Government has implemented various legislative measures to reduce air pollution in living spaces, as seen in the progress recorded under indicator 11.6.2 for 2021. Environmental Acts and Guidelines which include Air Pollution Control Regulations and Open Burning Regulations, ensure that open burning cases and air pollution remains low in neighbourhoods. The Pollution Control Guidelines for Industrial Development 2022 manages pollution as a result of industrial activities, which is further complemented by the, Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines (EIA) which will provide further understanding on the impacts of human activities on our environment.

The Government continues to work towards cleaner air by implementing air quality measures and monitoring systems across four districts for more robust monitoring and improved data collection. Brunei Darussalam also partnered with ASEAN member states as part of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution since 2003, committed to prevent, monitor transboundary haze pollution, and mitigate land and forest fires.

Other initiatives which will help promote health and well-being include enhancing green living spaces for residents through a national plan for pedestrian-related projects in highly urbanised areas and the Different Disabilities Design Guidelines for commercial and non-residential public buildings, to ensure inclusivity and participation by all members of society.

Towards Sustainable Construction Industry

The Construction Industry Framework 2023-2035 underlines the promotion of innovation and technology adoption in the building and construction practices to transform the industry towards sustainable development.

Brunei Accredited Green Unified Seal (BAGUS) is an initiative that aims to reward non-residential buildings that comply with criteria set under Green Building Certification with accredited certification. Other green building initiatives include adopting the Green Rating System which promotes the wider use of sustainable materials for development.

The rating system covers various elements relating to green buildings - energy efficiency, water efficiency, environmental protection, and indoor environmental quality.

The Sustainable Products Scheme has also been launched. This scheme serves as a registry of green and local products for a more sustainable construction industry. There is now a directive for newly constructed Government buildings to use materials under the registry by 2024. This will help to offset a nationwide adoption of environmentally friendly building materials and products as part of sustainable building development in the country.

Actions to Manage and Reduce Waste

The annual trend shows an increase in waste production in Brunei Darussalam. Between 2015 to 2021, municipal solid waste collected increased from 180,217 tonnes to 195,630 tonnes. This trend indicates that more needs to be done, to explore various measures to manage waste effectively, including the possibility of a circular economy approach where wastes are reused, recycled and repurposed, and diverted away from landfills.

Brunei Darussalam recycles its solid waste by shipping its materials overseas for final treatment. Thus, the country's national recycling wastes efforts have been largely dependent on and impacted by other countries' policies on plastic imports. The Government continues to work closely with industry players in sharing recycling data.

A recycling facility, Green Depot is able to recycle domestic, non-toxic waste and is currently operated by a youth-based environmental group Green Brunei. The group regularly partakes in advocacy and campaign drives for low impact living. The Government supports efforts to promote recycling

and proper disposal practices to minimise waste production. Various programmes and campaigns such as No Plastic Bag Everyday (NPBE), Plastic Bottle Free (PBF), and Bring Your Own Reusables (BYOR) promotes awareness around minimising waste and single-use plastics products. The comprehensive Recycle 123 Handbook is readily available online and provides guidance and information for proper waste disposal to the general public. Recently, the government also amended the customs import and excise duties which introduced a higher excise on plastic.

Addressing the behaviour aspect of waste production, the Government regularly engages stakeholders from various sectors such as academic institutions to continue its efforts in raising awareness on environmental and climate related issues, including high waste production. In recent years, the Government has opened up various facilities like Lambak Kiri Composting Centre, a material recovery facility for used tyres at Bukit Udal, and several e-waste and bulky waste depots to support national efforts in recycling.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

Brunei Darussalam continues to improve its resilience and preparedness against extreme weather events through the Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework (DMSPF). The framework identifies key priority areas which includes strategies for disaster mitigation and climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, disaster response and immediate relief. The framework is part of a regional collaboration ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Program 2021-2025.

Further strengthening its resilience, the Government is developing a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for climate change adaptation and resilience. NAP focuses on developing strategies for the three keys areas: adaptation, mitigation and resilience. Representatives from Government and private sector, academia and researchers, and climate-related NGOs were consulted through a series of stakeholder engagements in drafting the NAP.

Brunei Darussalam has also developed Flood Mitigating Strategy to address the nation's concerns with climate changes. With this strategy as framework, the Government has identified and implemented on flood mitigation projects such as widening and deepening of major rivers, developing detention ponds and drainage pump system. There are also ongoing Coastal Protection projects at two local beaches in Brunei Darussalam strengthening protection for life below water.

As part of landslide mitigation efforts, government agencies have implemented projects to enhance community protection and resilience against landslide occurrences. The projects utilise techniques that include sheet piling, reinforced earth wall, and designs such as Gabion Wall and Bored Pile Wall.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The country needs to continue to ensure that it remains inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It must also remain vigilant and continue its efforts in disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, and response, especially in mitigating the potential impact of climate change and rapid urbanisation such as floods, landslides, and extreme weather events. Opportunities exist for Brunei Darussalam to invest in a more effective disaster management practice. These involve creating and implementing stronger disaster response plans, investing in early warning systems, and educating the public on disaster preparedness measures.

All three landfill sites in the country are nearing the end of their lifespan with the main one projected to reach its capacity by 2030. The current practice of

landfilling is unsustainable and thus Brunei Darussalam has to increase its effort towards a more efficient, modern and sustainable solution to manage its waste. Considering the country's current waste situation, one potential solution is to develop a waste-to-energy facility to replace landfills, while paving the way towards circular economy.

There is also a need to sustain the government's efforts in regulating air quality and promoting cleaner energy sources. The decreasing trend in PM2.5 concentration is a positive indication, but it is important to ensure that this trend continues and does not stagnate or reverse. The Government continues to engage various stakeholders for the wider adoption of sustainable practices.

FEATURE 11

Town and Country Planning towards Sustainable and Resilient Future

The Department of Town and Country Planning at the Ministry of Development hosted its Golden Jubilee in 2022. A number of activities and programmes were held to celebrate the achievement and challenges throughout the 50 years, with the theme - Reviewing 50 Years of Town and Country Planning: Achievements, Challenges and The Future.

Seminar with the theme - Towards Sustainable and Resilience Future, Together: The seminar focused on issues pertaining to urban sustainability and resilience. It was a two-way sharing platform for smart and creative solutions to modern day urban planning related issues. A total of 17 papers were presented in the seminar with guest speakers ranging from the Government sector, think-tank and consultancy groups and researchers. The seminar focused on central themes around sustainable economic growth, sustainable and resilient urban environment, sustainable community, building sustainable and resilient future, and Smart cities.

The event also served as a platform to raise awareness of the Government's initiatives by holding exhibitions showcasing Government's current and future plans, as well as gathering participants to discuss and address sustainable city challenges, share integrated urban solutions, and forge new partnerships.

Walkability Retreat: The activity was attended by various stakeholders, including the public. Various activities were conducted during the retreat, including tree planting, a walkathon and a mini exhibition (Pedestrian Masterplan) and Green Initiatives.

Other activities were held to increase participation from the public and raise awareness on building towards a more sustainable and resilient future together such as an online exhibition to increase accessibility, documentary and a number of competitions.



Golden Jubilee Seminar on 'Towards Sustainable and Resilient Future, Together'
(Source: Town and Country Planning Department, Ministry of Development)



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 12

Ensure Sustainable Consumption And Production Patterns

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam is committed to achieving sustainable consumption and production through increased initiatives in sustainable waste management, sustainable tourism and empowering the community to be sustainable via whole-of-nation efforts. The heavy reliance of Brunei Darussalam’s economy on natural resources has put SDG indicator 12.c.1 on fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP off course.

Improved policy interventions, increased resource efficiency and circularity measures through a multi-stakeholder approach are essential for Brunei Darussalam to meet its national recycling rate target

of 30 per cent by 2030. The efforts thus far have yet to show a positive impact. Between 2015 and 2021, the recycling rate (SDG indicator 12.5.1) has been fluctuating across the years, where the rate has decreased from 25.2 per cent in 2015 to 8.7 per cent in 2021.

The implementation of standard accounting tools to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of tourism sustainability would greatly assist Brunei Darussalam in measuring the impacts of sustainable tourism in creating jobs and promoting local culture and products.

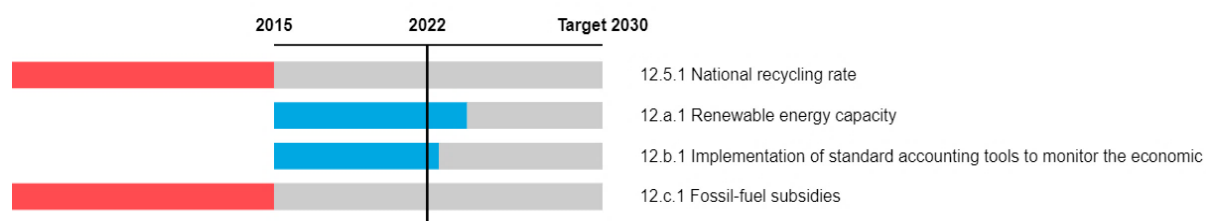


Figure 23 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 12

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Waste Management

Around 500-600 tonnes of waste goes to the Sungai Paku landfill every day and by 2025, it is predicted that the landfill will reach its full capacity. Current waste generation in Brunei Darussalam stands at 1.15 kilograms per capita per day. This comprises 32 per cent food waste, 29 per cent plastic and 11 per

cent green waste. As part of the initiative to reduce the amount of waste going into landfills, the Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe) under MOD actively carry out awareness and recycling initiative programmes and collaborate with NGOs.

Waste Minimisation

The No Plastic Bag Everyday initiative, an expansion of the No Plastic Bag Weekend initiative that was first introduced in 2011, was fully implemented starting 1 January 2019, where store no longer provide single-use carrier plastic bags.

Instead, customers are encouraged to bring their reusable bags to reduce plastic waste. This initiative has been extended to market stalls implemented by JASTRe with relevant government agencies in collaboration with NGOs such as Big BWN Project and Zero Waste Brunei.

Plastic Bottle Free Initiative is another initiative under JASTRe that has been expanded to other Ministries and beyond the public sector. This is an effort towards encouraging individuals to bring their reusable water bottles, collapsible cups or anything to refill or drink at the provided water dispensers. This initiative is also supported by NGOs such as Green Brunei at the *Bandarku Bersih* and *Bandarku Bebas Botol Plastik* during national events such as National Day Celebration.

In addition to the Plastic Bottle Free initiative, Bring Your Own Reusables initiative is introduced in conjunction with the Mid-Year Conference and Exhibition 2022 Climate Action Week in June 2022.

The initiative encourages the public to bring their reusables when they go out, especially focusing on food take-outs during the month of Ramadhan. Some government agencies have also adopted this approach in their respective cafeterias.

Various programmes have been conducted for students related to the concept of the 3Rs, including awareness talks and activities. STEAM Outreach Program is a flagship programme under the Science, Technology and Environment Partnership (STEP) Centre, Ministry of Education with various strategic partners, where the main themes are based on the environment, ecosystems, climate change and sustainable lifestyle.

Sustainable Tourism

The impact of travel restrictions from COVID-19 pandemic has shifted holiday interests towards domestic tourism in Brunei Darussalam. Local hotels rolled out staycations and dining promotions to attract keen local travelers. Domestic and community-based tourism became increasingly popular where tour companies sold packages to explore the beauty of Brunei Darussalam in each district with the help of Government-driven campaigns such as *Selera Bruneiiku*. *Selera Bruneiiku* is based on the concept that each district has its own unique cuisine and fresh ingredients, with ten eateries and accommodation establishments developing promotional menus to give residents a wide selection of traditional dishes. Staycation packages, tours and visits to areas of interest within each respective district were also available in collaboration with tourism service providers.

Community-based tourism also gained more visitors during the pandemic where locals prefer exploring new niche activities. For example, the Sumbiling Eco Village, a popular eco-tourism destination with an eco-lodge offering a unique experience with activities that include a guided herbal discovery

track, foraging activity and the farm-to-table experience that serves an array of traditional Iban cuisine. Another popular spot for eco-tourism called Eco Ponies Garden, offers a farm stay experience and flavourful farm-to-table cuisines based on recipes from the indigenous community. The cooked meals are made with the freshest and organic ingredients from the property.

As a result of rising domestic and community-based tourism, new walking trails are explored and traditional hobbies are revisited. Green, natural and local are the new taglines and the country has much to offer in those areas such as The Ulu Temburong National Park, known as the 'Green Jewel' of Brunei Darussalam. In December 2021, The Abode Resort and Spa commenced operations. This unique luxury safari-style villa is situated alongside the tranquil waters of the Labu River, where luxury and nature converge for the perfect getaway. It is Brunei Darussalam's first solar powered luxury resort which supports the country's commitment to sustainable tourism. The construction also uses recycled materials and limits single-use plastics on-site.

Towards Green Consumerism

Sustainable living has become increasingly important in Brunei Darussalam. The nation's shift towards green consumerism is slowly growing and has set environmental stability as a high priority. Numerous business companies have embarked on sustainable practices and provide accessible options to use less plastic, recycled packaging, and sustainable products. This initiative encourages and

activates the consumers' support for a more healthy and sustainable future. This can be seen with the rising number of sustainable stores and products as this supports the circular economy model where the economic system is based on the reuse and regeneration of materials or products, to continue production in a sustainable or environmentally-friendly way.

Some examples of businesses supporting this agenda are as follows:

- Ranging from household and body care to cleaning items, Kaimana Living's products focus on quality, an awareness of product lifecycle and a circular economy. They follow a refill business model for body care products and fine foods, and they are growing their selection of refill products to avoid single-use packaging that all goes to landfill.
- Aimed at providing solutions to the country's environmentally sustainable challenges, EnEvo Sdn. Bhd. is Brunei Darussalam's first recycling company that produces tissue products from waste papers. The company focuses on resource recovery in order to make full use of waste papers by converting them to medium-low grade tissue paper rolls.
- For oil waste, Shaliz Waste Recycling Sdn. Bhd. pays attention to the proper disposal of cooking oil. The company collects used cooking oil and recycles it, to create fuel alternatives and household products.
- Kehasan (B) Sdn. Bhd. keeps tyres away from landfill and provides a green solution by converting them into synthetic liquid oil or pyro-oil, while generating minimal to zero pollution. This product can substitute industrial oil used for activities such as brick production and heat production in boilers. The facility is run as part of PPP project with JASTRe.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The country's commitment to achieving sustainable consumption and production is strong as shown with various initiatives introduced and implemented. However, Brunei Darussalam still has a long way to go in achieving Goal 12. Challenges in this area include the nation's consumption behaviours that are unsustainable and wasteful. This can be addressed by having nation-wide awareness campaigns on the importance of being responsible consumers and producers for the environment and the country. Investments in infrastructure and advanced technologies are also an important long-term plan.

Looking into improving the national recycling rate, there is a need to look into the country's limited recycling infrastructure and services. There is also a need to increase the public's understanding of recycling and its impact to the environment, and shift their behaviour towards sustainability. Additionally, dependency on overseas recycling could affect the nation's waste minimisation efforts. Brunei Darussalam is looking into projects that are using waste-to-energy technology to improve the country's waste management system.

Other opportunities include further collaborations with the private sector and other stakeholders, such as decentralised waste management systems, community-based initiatives and strengthening PPP. Education and awareness campaigns should also be intensified to promote proper waste disposal, and incentivising businesses and individuals to adopt more sustainable waste practices.

There is also an opportunity for Brunei Darussalam to invest in and develop innovative technologies and methods for renewable energy production. Private firms and NGOs such as Green Brunei have worked closely to promote awareness on renewable source and green technology among the younger generation through organised school tours to green sites such as Tenaga Suria Brunei, Brunei Darussalam's first solar plant. The country can build on these activities and conduct them more frequently and scaled beyond the community-level as part of actions to promote and drive for sustainable practices and management for the nation.

FEATURE 12

NGOs Role in Support of Goal 12

Kilang ReRoot

Kilang ReRoot (KRR) was established with the aim to tackle food waste and consumption in Brunei Darussalam. In tackling the issue of a high proportion of food waste in the country, KRR aims to approach the issue using the three pillars of sustainability: reducing food waste (environment) by involving multiple sectors of the community (society) and creating opportunities for local businesses through food upcycling projects and initiatives (economy).

KRR began as a female-led team in November 2020. The group was awarded the 2021 YSEALI SEEDS for the Future grantee and held various projects ranging from farm visits, macramé-bag workshops, food distribution to underprivileged families and migrant workers, various talks and exhibitions, and upskilling events with students, among others.

The group takes a multisectoral approach which allows them to contribute towards national development by reducing food waste, promoting sustainable consumption and waste production, and reducing climate risks through over consumption.

Environmental Evolution (EnEvo)

EnEvo established in 2016 with the vision to create solutions to both local and global environmental sustainability challenges through waste management. Apart from providing Brunei Darussalam a recycling platform as an attempt to cultivate recycling behaviour and ultimately reduce the country's wastage, EnEvo has also adopted the concept of circular economy through the production and manufacturing of Brunei Darussalam's first sustainable toilet paper made 100 per cent from recycled paper pulp. Various packages have been created to spark public interest including recycling starter pack, collection services, school and corporate one-year recycling programmes and sustainable destruction of confidential documents. Since its establishment, EnEvo have processed more than 100 tonnes of papers into toilet tissues, distributing the products to local supermarkets and major cleaning service providers across the country.

EnEvo promotes efficient use of resources where every roll of tissue produced becomes a solution to paper waste. Through interception of paper waste, EnEvo is able to save trees (raw resources) by utilising and maximising the use of paper pulp which could otherwise end up in landfills. Through minimising the amount of waste going to landfills, EnEvo has also indirectly contributed to reducing methane (CH₄) emissions from landfills. EnEvo also promotes its education awareness programmes through strong collaboration with educational institutions across the country to enhance public participation in 4R (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) related initiatives.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 13

Taking Urgent Action To Combat Climate Change And Its Impacts

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to the global call for climate action. The country responded by developing and implementing various national roadmaps and strategies against climate change including the development and implementation of the national roadmap against climate change, Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy (BNCCP) and the establishment of the ASEAN

Climate Change Center (ACCC) soon in Brunei Darussalam. For indicator 13.2.2, Brunei Darussalam has made considerable achievements in this area. The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are estimated from four sectors namely energy, industrial processes and product use (IPPU), agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU), and waste.

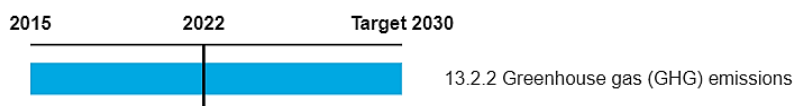


Figure 24 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 13

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In 2021, Brunei Darussalam’s gross GHG emissions were estimated at 14 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2021. The energy sector accounts for 95 per cent of total GHG emissions, and it was mainly driven by power generation for industries’ use and public utilities. The nation reiterates its commitment to the global call to combat climate change with the submission of its Nationally Determined Contributions in 2020 where the country aims to reduce its GHG emissions by 20 per cent by 2030 relative to Business-As-Usual (BAU) levels. Brunei Darussalam also launched its first national climate change policy, BNCCP in 2020.

The Government is developing national strategies, policies and roadmaps to reduce GHG industrial emissions through green technologies and innovation. Industrial emissions were successfully kept below its annual target of 9.85 MtCO2e in 2021.

To drive more progress, the Government is developing the As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) policy, Zero Routine Flaring policy and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) strategy and roadmap to manage industrial emissions. The country also conducted a study with the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) on the assessment of carbon pricing options in Brunei Darussalam. The study aims to assess the potential of carbon pricing implementation and recommend a carbon pricing model for the country.

In an effort to address GHG emissions from land transportation sector, the Government is currently reviewing the existing roadmap or action plan for EVs that aims to boost EV ownership in the country. Coordinated efforts for reviewing tariffs, building EV infrastructure, and robust promotional campaigns are crucial in ensuring increased EVs uptake among drivers.

The country aims to increase EV share up to 60 per cent of total annual sales by 2035 as per the current ambition of the BNCCP. This strategy will be carried out by the Electric Vehicle Joint Task Force (EVJTF), co-led by MTIC and Department of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office, and will focus on EV while other options such as fuel economic regulation, other energy efficient vehicles, public transportation, and smart urban planning to promote low carbon travel could also be considered by the relevant agencies. The EVJTF has recently completed a two-year Electric Vehicles Pilot Programme, which began on 25 March 2021 and is currently assessing options to further move forward the strategy.

As the world shifts towards a low carbon economy, the Government is exploring different mechanisms to increase the share of renewable energy (RE) to at least 30 per cent of total power generation mix. A Renewable Energy Committee spearheaded by the Department of Energy at the Prime Minister's Office was recently established to oversee the development of RE in Brunei Darussalam. This taskforce, consisting of relevant government agencies, industry players and private sectors will work to increase the capacity of RE to at least 250 MW by 2030 through the construction of small, medium and large-scale projects, implementing collaborative RE projects with relevant stakeholders and continuation of solar projects deployment in rural areas. As of March 2023, Brunei Darussalam has a total RE capacity of 6 MW from Solar. In 2021, the Temburong District Office also installed 255 solar panels on its rooftop which can generate up to 100 kWp of clean energy, marking the first solar-powered government building in Brunei Darussalam. Other projects to support this strategy include implementing an efficient metering system with the Unified Smart Metering System and developing energy offset mechanisms for energy intensive industries.

The strategy to reduce GHG emissions from power generation by at least 10 per cent by 2035 (from BAU levels) includes initiatives such as promoting energy-efficient appliances and implementing energy management systems in buildings.

The Government has also introduced regulations for the energy efficiency of buildings, with a target to reduce energy consumption in buildings by 20 per cent by 2030. A plan is currently being developed for the installation of energy efficiency and conservation measures in government buildings and facilities. However, significant investments to upgrade ageing infrastructure is required to achieve higher efficiency in power plants and other buildings.

Waste management plays a significant role in addressing climate change. Improper waste in landfills, contributes to the emission of GHG such as methane. The BNCCP waste management strategy seeks to reduce GHG contribution, and reduce waste to 1kg per person per day by minimising the amount of waste that needs to be disposed of through waste minimisation, adoption of best practices and innovative technologies.

Various initiatives are currently in the pipeline such as imposing taxes on single use plastics and strengthening waste management regulation. The amount of waste generated per person per day is gradually decreasing, and has successfully achieved its target reduction over the past two years.

Afforestation and reforestation programmes are being implemented and supported nationwide to preserve and increase Brunei Darussalam's carbon sink. An example of the programmes is the reforestation project at the Berakas Forest Reserve in 2022, a joint effort between the Government, private businesses and firms, NGOs and local communities where 500 trees were planted at the Biodiversity Park.

Another example of successful collaboration is the Badas Restoration Project where academics and researchers from UBD collaborated with government agencies, NGOs and local communities to rehabilitate the degraded peat swamp forest in the Belait district. To date, 600 tree saplings have been planted in this area, and the research office IBER, UBD is researching and monitoring the progress and growth of the saplings.

Other efforts include working with relevant agencies to support the National Forest Resources Inventory Project, which will give a better understanding of the forest ecosystem in the country. Forest cover constitutes about 72 per cent, or 380,000 hectares of land area which plays a vital role in carbon sequestration. Brunei Darussalam aims to increase its forest reserve from 41 per cent to 55 per cent of the total land area. A National Forest Resources Inventory project is currently ongoing to ascertain actual forest cover, and its outcome could result in the revision of the current quoted volume of forest cover.

The Government further supports this initiative through the publication of Green Protocol, a guideline for ways to reduce carbon footprint at government premises through a reduction in

energy, water, paper and plastic usage. The handbook includes annual targets for tree planting by every government ministry as well as a guideline on tree-planting methodologies.

A local SME, Sphiere developed the mobile application, Atmosphere supporting this initiative further. The mobile application is designed to include features such as a carbon calculator and tree planting guidelines. Since its launch, the company has secured pledges for planting 1,020 trees for the country. More than 80,000 new trees have been planted since 2020 with approximately 586 hectares of degraded lands within forest reserves and logged-over forests have been reforested and restored, moving steadily towards the national target of planting 500,000 new trees by 2035.

Adaptation and Resilience Against Climate Change

The Government has placed focus on the importance of Adaptation and Resilience towards Climate Change. Though Brunei Darussalam's contribution towards the global GHG emissions is minuscule, it is not exclusive to the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, coastal erosion and increasing rainfall. This poses greater risk to Brunei Darussalam, especially as a coastal country, and strategic economic hubs which are located by the coastline.

In response to the challenge brought upon by climate change, the Government announced in its National Statement at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) in 2022, that it would be developing its National Adaptation Plan (NAP). Brunei Darussalam is currently in the process of drafting the NAP which involves a number of risk assessments that will be conducted as a foundation for the development of the plan to prepare for climate-induced disasters. The NAP seeks to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs, informed by the latest climate science. It will also focus on outlining the country's vulnerabilities and key risks to climate change impacts and identification of prioritised adaptation efforts, needs and actions required.

The NAP is a critical planning tool to prepare for prioritized climate-induced disasters that have been identified and will facilitate efficient resource allocation, both human and financial, by:

- Developing and Implementing the National Climate Adaptation Plan and strengthen the country's resilience towards climate impacts;
- Identifying capabilities and infrastructure needed for long-term national climate adaptation strategies, which includes nature-based solutions, leveraging on the country's richness in biodiversity; and
- Assessing Brunei Darussalam's vulnerability to the effects of Climate Change Coordinate adaptation efforts across all sectors by managing respective stakeholders in the Adaptation and Resilience ecosystem.

The Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS) Adaptation and Resilience Team is responsible for national coordination of Climate Change Adaptation efforts, working together with a diverse group of stakeholders to develop the NAP, and in support of that, but not limited to, conducting research on climate change, tracking and monitoring the Adaptation and Resilience efforts, and also serve as the secretariat for the Adaptation and Resilience Working Group (ARWG).

The ARWG was established to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, promote knowledge sharing, and develop comprehensive adaptation strategies such as the NAP. It is also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of adaptation and resilience initiatives in Brunei Darussalam, identifying gaps, tracking outcomes, and refining strategies for improvement. The ARWG strives to engage stakeholders, raise public awareness, foster partnerships, conduct outreach activities, and involve communities in decision-making processes. The ARWG comprises of key stakeholders within the country's Adaptation and Resilience ecosystem, such as the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC). The Centre has developed the Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework (DMSPF) as the national framework for disaster management. The Framework outlines strategies for disaster mitigation and climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and disaster response and immediate relief.

Community involvement is key in strengthening the country's preparedness and resilience against extreme weather events. The Government has

implemented three programmes to support national initiatives to reduce risks of natural hazards on vulnerable communities; the Community Outreach Programmes, Community- Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) and Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Programme (DPC). These programmes enhance participation from the community and grassroots leaders, village council members, and the youth community. In 2022, a total of 1,759 participants were recorded under CBDRM and DPC.

On the regional front, Brunei Darussalam is an active member of the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), which serves as a regional platform for building capacity and coordinating efforts for responses and assessments to disasters in the ASEAN region. Brunei Darussalam hosted the 11th ASEAN-ERAT Induction Course in 2019, and currently has trained 27 ASEAN ERAT members from Brunei Darussalam. Other mitigation projects such as flood mitigation projects, landslide mitigation projects and coastal protection projects help improve Brunei Darussalam's resilience against climate risks.

Raising Awareness of Climate Change

The global climate movement has increasingly gained traction in the country and overseas, particularly with the younger generation. Brunei Darussalam has seen a rise in green-related NGOs, campaigns and low-impact living enterprises.

To sustain this, the Government continues its efforts for a nationwide push including integrating climate change-related programmes and educational resources into schools and universities. The main mission of the STEP Centre under MOE is to promote STEAM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Design and Technology, Art and Mathematics) through various programmes and integration into the educational system. An example of their programmes is the Green-School Initiatives that aims to promote the implementation of green activities in schools. Through this initiative, students receive education around the 3Rs, sustainable waste management and green schools. To supplement this effort, STEP Centre has also released a guidebook titled 'Guidebook for Initiating Green-Schools in Brunei Darussalam'.

Other sectors also play an important part in raising Climate Change awareness in the country. The Environment Education Tour is a joint effort between multiple stakeholders including government agencies, private firm and NGOs, to raise students' awareness around green technologies and solutions for a greener world such as Electric Vehicles and renewable energy.

Academia, research institutes and technical education institutes further support national efforts in Goal 13 by conducting research projects and programmes that aid in policy recommendations. Between 2019 to 2022, UBD shared that Brunei Darussalam produced 128 research papers related to Goal 13, where studies range from impact-studies to assessment of techno-economy and its environmental impact. NGOs such as Green Brunei, Sustainable Ocean Alliance Brunei, and Reef Check Brunei, play a crucial role in raising awareness of Climate Change and its impacts through their campaigns and volunteering activities.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Climate change capabilities and capacity refer to a country's ability to understand, monitor, mitigate, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Implementing mitigation measures in some sectors has been challenging due to various factors, including policy and regulatory barriers, lack of awareness and capacity, and inadequate financing. Projects such as Carbon Capture Storage and Carbon Sink Projects require technical and scientific knowledge for effective implementation and monitoring. Deployment of green and renewable technologies such as EVs has been challenging. This is largely due to high importing costs and a lack of infrastructure to sustain EVs ownership over a period of time. Incentives and awareness around EVs and other domestic green appliances such as solar panels must be enhanced to increase the rate of ownership in the country.

Effective data collection for monitoring progress needs to be strengthened further. The Government is exploring different mechanisms and leveraging on networks and partnerships to enhance data capabilities and quality. To improve the quality of data, Brunei Darussalam introduced the Mandatory Reporting Directive, part of the nation's deliverables mentioned in our National Statement to COP27 in 2022, which directs all facilities that emits or removes GHG to report their emissions to the

Government. This will allow the nation to keep track accurately of both the nation's emissions and carbon absorption, which in turn allows Brunei Darussalam to keep a close track of the effectiveness of the nation's policies in reducing GHG emissions. Such information provides the country vital information to keep track of its contribution to the global Paris Agreement in reducing carbon emissions.

In order to improve the development and rate of green technology utilisation in the country, innovative financing models such as green bonds, crowdfunding, and impact investing, can provide alternative sources of funding for climate change technologies. This will also promote shared values across many sectors, ensuring coordinated efforts and a stronger whole-of-nation action against climate changes.

The Oil and Gas industry plays a pivotal role as the primary economic catalyst for Brunei Darussalam. Stronger collaboration between government agencies, the private sector and the public is essential in ensuring the alignment of policies and effective project implementation towards a low carbon economy.

FEATURE 13

Climate Actions for Brunei Darussalam

Situated on the northern coast of Borneo Island, Brunei Darussalam is at risk of rising sea levels. This means the country is susceptible to extreme events such as flooding, landslides and saltwater intrusion, which can have devastating impact especially on coastal communities. Rising temperature becomes a major threat for the country posing greater public health dangers and the spread of vector-borne diseases. These calamities threaten the good work made in other areas including food security, good health, poverty eradication and economic growth among others.

Brunei Darussalam Climate Change Secretariat and Brunei Darussalam's National Council on Climate Change

The Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS) established in 2018 and functions as a government authority mandated to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate Brunei Darussalam's climate change policies, strategies, and actions to address issues of climate change. As a signal of growing national importance, BCCS was then placed under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office in 2022. They are guided by and report to Brunei Darussalam's National Council on Climate Change.

Launching of Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy in 2020

On 25 July 2020, Brunei Darussalam announced its climate change strategy, BNCCP outlining strategies for low-carbon and climate-resilient pathways, including strategies to facilitate national efforts in reducing its total GHG emissions through efforts such as transition towards renewable energy, exploring green technologies and solutions for carbon offsetting, waste management strategies, and raising climate awareness. The country has implemented various initiatives and projects to help achieve Brunei Darussalam's global climate actions pledges. However, challenges in the form of data collection, lacking green capacity and expertise, and robust policies that are data-driven, remain a barrier for climate actions.

ASEAN Climate Change Centre

The ASEAN Climate Change Centre (ACCC) is set to be established in Brunei Darussalam. It will function as an inter-governmental Centre for Climate Change Coordination and Cooperation among ASEAN member states. It will serve as a central knowledge hub for ASEAN and Climate Data statistics. When fully operationalised, ACCC aims to carry out three objectives: i) to produce and publish research related to climate change that is accessible to ASEAN member states and relevant stakeholders; ii) to act as a one-stop centre for regional data on climate change and standardised forecasting tools and systems; and iii) coordinate and integrate climate change initiatives, programmes and research with ASEAN member states for strategic alignment.

Raising Climate Change Public Awareness and Action

Increasing public knowledge and understanding of climate-related issues is key to promoting sustainable behaviour. In 2022, 11 awareness programmes and 307 education programmes were conducted and led by the MOE and BCCS. Various stakeholders such as government agencies, private sectors, banking institutions, and climate change-related NGOs, support various awareness-raising activities on sustainable practices to reduce carbon footprint and waste management practices which signifies a whole-of-nation effort towards combating climate change.

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

The BNCCP serves as the basis of Brunei Darussalam's NDC, submitted in December 2020, to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to implement national plans to reduce GHG emissions by 20 per cent relative to BAU levels by 2030. This declaration acts as a milestone for the country to partake in international partnerships and actions honouring the Paris Agreement on net zero emissions. Industries successfully achieved above target emissions reduction two years since the launch of the BNCCP.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14

Conserve And Sustainably Use The Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The coastline of Brunei Darussalam is dominantly lined by mangrove forests while the coral reefs cover part of the open sea – both hover rich marine biodiversity and ecosystem. The Government has taken initiatives towards the establishment and enforcement of marine environment policies and acts to regulate, monitor and manage activities that might cause harm or damage to the environment and its ecosystem. Over the past decades, several policies and acts have been passed, reviewed and updated, where relevant by the Government in an effort to conserve and protect marine resources. Whilst uplifting the quality of life, ensuring progressive development and diversifying the country's economy, the Government recognises the need to conserve and sustainably use marine resources.

Encouraging development has been observed to ensure ocean health and the sustainable use of marine resources. Monitoring changes in seawater pH to detect ocean acidification, it was measured that marine acidity averaged between pH 6 to 8 from 2015 until 2020. To ensure the sustainability of fish stocks, the proportion of marine fish stocks has been indicated to be within biologically sustainable levels. However, in terms of the value added to sustainable marine capture fisheries in relation to GDP, the value has been estimated to be below 2015 levels. This suggested the country's economy saw a fall in marine fish-related activities. Meanwhile, the proportion of marine key biodiversity areas that have been designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Brunei Darussalam's water remains at 5.4 per cent.

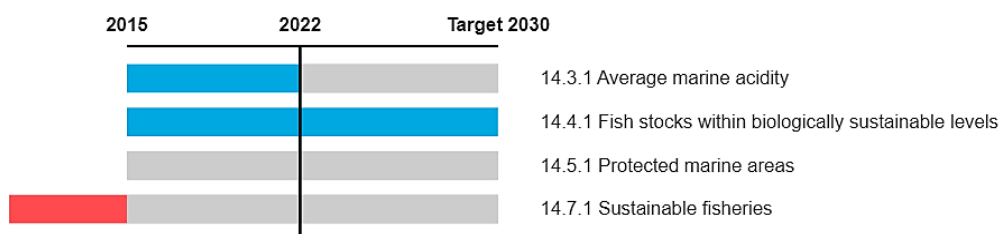


Figure 25 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 14

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Conservation and Preservation of Marine Ecosystem

With the Fisheries Order 2009 in place, enforcement measures were strengthened to regulate and ensure more sustainable fishing activities whilst minimising the risk of damaging the environment especially the seabed and coral reefs. One of the actions that the Government took was limiting the issuance of licenses on listed fishing gears. Some gears for certain fishing methods are also banned such as banning of trawl fishing gears.

Brunei Darussalam's marine territorial area covers about 38,600 square kilometres with a Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) of about 21,300 metric tonnes. For protection, conservation and fisheries management, the marine territorial area is divided into four zones. To complement this zoning system, in 2012, the Government declared six MPAs with a total coverage area of 182.53 square kilometres of which about 50 square kilometres are covered by coral reefs.

Though fishing is allowed in the area, limits are placed on fishing activities to enable fisheries resources to be restored at a sustainable level as well as prevent damage to the marine environment and deterioration of its biodiversity.

In order to enrich and restore marine resources and the ecosystem, the Government enforces a moratorium on fishing operations in zones of the marine territorial area. The Government collaborates with NGOs to construct artificial reef areas to provide shelter and breeding areas for fishes. This is part of the strategy to enhance fisheries resources and improve the ecosystem. The network of artificial reefs makes up parts of the MPAs in order to manage the life cycles of fish and connectivity.

To support work in ensuring marine sustainability, NGOs, such as Reef Check Brunei, take on the initiative to regularly conduct coral restoration activities at the grassroots level. The Coral Conservation, Awareness, Rehabilitation and Enrichment (CARE) programme has also been implemented since 2014 to support and

complement the works and programmes of the Department of Fisheries in the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and replanting of degraded or damaged coral reefs. An initiative called Sea Shepherd Dive provides training to the volunteers to strengthen awareness, education and conservation of coral reefs.

Brunei Darussalam actively monitors ocean acidification, which can have overall adverse effects, posing a threat to marine food chains and the human food supply. The marine acidity in Brunei Darussalam has maintained between pH 6-8 since 2015. The Fisheries Order 2009 governs the protection and management of marine biodiversity in the country, in which one of the provisions is the establishment and management of marine reserves and parks. The Department of Fisheries continues to enforce and ensure that the country's marine resources are protected and managed sustainably. The Department is also continuously monitoring the water quality and any occurrences of coastal eutrophication through the collection of samples for water quality data and chlorophyll-a data to aid in the ocean's health management.

Towards Sustainable Fishing

The fisheries sector plays a role in Brunei Darussalam's national efforts towards economic diversification. A move towards sustainability will ensure gains for all, such as an increase in yield for fishermen; a healthier and richer marine environment; and a more secure food supply for the country. However, progress in indicator 14.4.1 suggests that the proportion of fish stocks is becoming less sustainable. The maximum sustainable yield (MSY) set at 21,300 metric tonnes represents the amount of sustainable harvest that can be safely taken without depleting the resource, or negatively impacting the environment.

There has been a decline in fish stocks which indicates that we are moving further away from the 'abundance' level of fish stock. As seen in 2015, the proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels was below the MSY at 17,333 metric tonnes and moving further away in 2021 with yield dropping to 15,296 metric tonnes. While output of fish stocks has seen an increase in recent years, the data suggests that in order to have enough fish resources to feed the present and future generations, there needs to be a sustainable management and development approach to benefit the fisheries sector.

Undeterred Enforcement of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

Since 2011, the Brunei Darussalam National Action Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing (NPOA-IUU) has provided a strong framework to effectively enhance and strengthen the overall level of fisheries management in Brunei Darussalam's waters; sustain fisheries resources and the marine environment; and optimize the benefit of adopting responsible fishing practices. Licensing and

Enforcement Division which was established within the Department of Fisheries has ensured the prevention of overexploitation of fisheries resources specifically from poaching and illegal forms of fishing, and other IUU fishing activities, through the acquisition of additional patrol boats, additional manpower, and law enforcement personnel, which is in accordance with NPOA-IUU of Brunei Darussalam.

To date, the Department of Fisheries is actively conducting surveillance and enforcement operations: *Operasi Kembura*; *Operasi Menangin*; and Joint Operations with various government enforcement agencies, and through the coordination by the National Maritime Coordinating Centre (NMCC) under the Prime Minister's Office.

In order to protect yields for the small-scale fishermen, the Department of Fisheries has launched the Moratorium on Fishing Operation in Zone 1 of the Brunei Darussalam's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for exploitation of fisheries resources, where the zone has been designated for

small-scale fishing communities particularly for food security, source of income, employment and livelihoods.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of patrol officers was inevitable due to the surge of COVID cases and exposures. In response to such a crisis, the Department of Fisheries reviewed staffing plans and ensured all staff complied with General Advisory for Workplace in Response to COVID-19, issued by MOH. The success of adaptive enforcement operations during the pandemic continues to be the key to protecting and sustaining marine resources in Brunei Darussalam.

International Commitment and Efforts Towards Marine Life Protection

Brunei Darussalam has been committed to cooperating and fostering collaboration with international organisations to protect, conserve and sustainably use marine resources. This platform gives the government and non-government agencies the opportunities to exchange information, learn global perspectives and best practices.

In conjunction with World Ocean Day, the United Nation's Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has coordinated an annual event to raise awareness of the crucial role the ocean plays in people's lives, and the important ways people can help protect it. Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) Brunei is among the local NGOs representing Brunei Darussalam as part of a global community collaborating to solve the challenges faced in protecting the ocean. Whilst it is important to protect and conserve the marine environment, protecting the marine flora and fauna is equally important. Brunei Darussalam's commitment to the conservation and sustainable use and management of its marine resources is aligned with national and international agendas.

Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), an international agreement between governments has been established to ensure that international trade of animals and plants does not threaten their survival. The agreement enables the country to gain access to resources that would help with its effort in economic diversification through the marine industry that is more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Among the protected marine life are sea turtles. Several species of sea turtles can be found in Brunei Darussalam include the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*), and olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) which are protected under the Fisheries Order 2009. The Brunei Darussalam Sea Turtle Conservation Programme (BDSTCP) is a government-led initiative that aims to protect and conserve sea turtles in Brunei Darussalam by conducting regular surveys to monitor sea turtle populations through initiatives such as the establishment of protected nesting sites. In 2020, the BDSTCP collaborated with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to launch a joint project to reduce the impact of abandoned fishing nets on sea turtles in Brunei Darussalam.

Marine Research and Key Biodiversity Areas in Brunei Darussalam

In Brunei Darussalam, several marine key biodiversity areas (KBAs) have been identified based on their importance for the conservation of marine biodiversity. These KBAs include Tungku Beach Conservation Area, Brunei Bay, Muara-Tutong Mangroves and Pelong Rocks.

Various research studies conducted in these areas such as seagrass beds and nesting ecology of sea turtles in Tungku Beach Conservation Area, the distribution and abundance of dugongs and Irrawaddy dolphins in Brunei Bay.

The Marine Biodiversity Centre in Meragang, under the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism has been working together with various academic institutions and NGOs to provide continuous education and awareness on the importance of protecting and conserving marine life and its environment. Brunei Bay is an important habitat for

dugongs and Irrawaddy dolphins, and their presence in the bay indicates the health and biodiversity of the bay's ecosystem. Research and conservation efforts aimed at protecting these threatened species and their habitat are important for maintaining the health and sustainability of Brunei Darussalam's marine resources.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Brunei Darussalam continues to enjoy a high gross output from the fisheries sector through aquaculture, and capture fisheries, moving positively towards an alternative and sustainable economic model for the country. However, understanding and mitigating the tradeoffs between economic gains with biodiversity loss remains a national priority and challenge.

Despite efforts in restocking fish supplies through various national programmes, the shortage of raw materials forces the country to still rely on global supply chains. The rapid growth of the fisheries sector meant that there is a greater demand for manpower, especially in the seafood processing industry for increased fisheries output. Local

entrepreneurs also require greater financial support schemes, access to potential customers, and greater facilitation in matching suppliers with potential buyers. There are opportunities for industry development, providing local fishermen with employment and participation in the economy, as well as securing food supplies sustainably for the country's population.

However, against the backdrop of rapid economic activity, population growth and declining fish stocks that are happening around the globe including Brunei Darussalam, more protective and restorative mechanisms are required to ensure the balance of various developments and prevent biodiversity loss.

FEATURE 14

Ocean Preservation Efforts

Reef Check Brunei

Reef Check Brunei (RCB) is a registered NGO dedicated to the conservation of coral reefs in Brunei Darussalam through education, research and conservation. Founded in 2016, RCB's mission is to empower people to save the nation's reefs and ocean through the three key pillars and aims to train volunteer divers to become EcoDivers to conduct Reef Check Survey to monitor the status of Brunei Darussalam's reefs.

Close collaboration is fostered with stakeholders at all levels including academic institutions, corporates, government agencies as well as international partners such as Reef Check Foundation and Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) to share common practices and knowledge sharing in the areas of reef conservation. RCB currently runs at 18 members who actively volunteer their time during the weekend to help out with the organisation's operation. RCB also fosters close partnerships with various stakeholders including dive operators, corporates and schools by supporting them in their green initiatives in order to raise awareness of the importance of marine life and the ocean within their own communities.

Some of their projects are as follows:

Coral Restoration Brunei: The ongoing reef restoration project aims to restore some of the degraded reefs at popular dive sites by attaching coral fragments on hexagonal frames made entirely from repurposed rebar. This move was initiated as a step towards countering climate change as coral reefs suffer heat stress globally and are projected to continue to remain the same in the next decade. Since January 2022, the team has managed to plant 500 corals that are evenly spread across seven frames, and this project will be further expanded to other parts of the marine protected sites in the country.

Project AWARE Dive Against Debris[®] Survey: This is an international movement under PADI AWARE where volunteer divers conduct underwater marine-debris clean-up operations and collect data on the number of debris obtained during each dive.

Sustainable Ocean Alliance Brunei

Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) Hub in Brunei Darussalam was established in 2020 and acts as a platform for those who are passionate about ocean conservation to obtain resources, funding and expertise.

Its missions are to educate and connect young leaders in Brunei Darussalam with international experts as well as provide funding to diversify the efforts in ocean preservation; and provide toolkits and guidelines to promote environmentally-friendly behaviours among the general population.

Some of their projects are as follows:

AdvocaSEA Camp: This camp aims to build the capacity of youths to raise awareness on ocean conservation, project management and leadership, where 3 teams were awarded a mini-grant worth BND 500 to execute ocean conservation projects ensuring continuous supply from river resources.

River Clean-Up Operations (RECOVER): SOA BN, a youth-led NGO, engaged more than 200 volunteers who had successfully collected more than 310 bags of waste. For their fifth clean up activity, volunteers hauled in 244 kilogrammes of waste from the river.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 15

Protect, Restore And Promote Sustainable Use Of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainable Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, And Halt And Reverse Land Degradation And Halt Biodiversity Loss

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

More than 70 per cent of Brunei Darussalam are covered by forest, which are some of the oldest pristine Tropical Rainforest in the world. The nation maintained 72 per cent of its region as forest area through the implementation and enforcement of a series of policies and acts. Brunei Darussalam continues to balance its activities in the timber

industry while maintaining its forest reserves and protecting the nation’s wealth of biodiversity. This is reflected in the progress for indicators 15.1.1 and 15.5.1 where Brunei Darussalam has reached its targets. Limited data and technical capacity remain a challenge for the country to determine true progress in other areas under Goal 15.

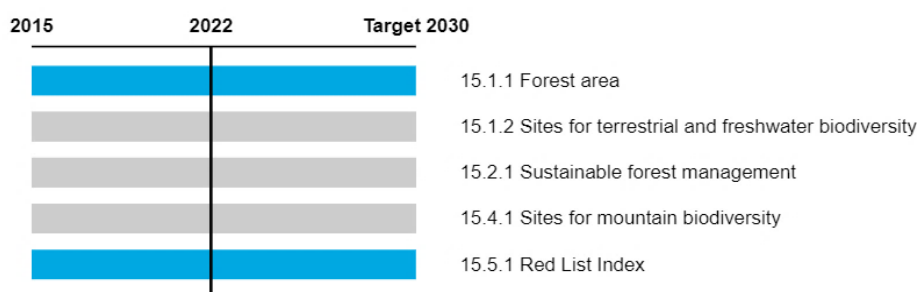


Figure 26 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 15

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reforestation and Restoration

Brunei Darussalam is able to maintain its forest area of 72 per cent through the implementation of programmes and initiatives that support reforestation and restoration efforts. The national strategy for reforestation is outlined in the BNCCP. This is further supported by other national guidelines and handbooks such as The Green Protocol for advocating and raising awareness of eco-friendly practices.

The whole of nation came together to collaborate and coordinate activities to maximise impact in this area. Government agencies, business firms, education institutions and research groups, NGOs and local communities have collaborated on various processes from the consultation phase to implementation on the ground.

One of the key initiatives for reforestation is nationwide tree planting activities that have been gaining momentum in the country in recent years. Both public and private sectors alike are dedicated to this cause and have organised events and activities around tree planting. To highlight further the importance of forest area in the country, tree planting activities were organised on awareness days such as International Day of Forests 2022 and Earth Day 2020 to promote awareness regarding this issue among the people of Brunei Darussalam. A total of 213 tree saplings were planted to mark the International Day of Forests in an event organised by the Forestry Department under the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism at Andulau Forest Reserve. This activity also helps biodiversification by strategically planting loss or threatened species in appropriate soils.

As of 2022, a total of 79,625 new trees were planted with approximately 586 hectares of degraded lands within forest reserves and logged-over forests have been reforested and restored. Brunei Darussalam's restoration efforts focus largely on the peatlands and peat swamp forests that were lost through economic activities over the years. In 2021, the country focused on degraded area on Badas Forest Reserve, one of the country's largest peat swamp forest reserves. For this project the Government engaged and consulted experts, researchers as well

as community leaders integrating scientific data and knowledge with local experience informing restoration strategies to facilitate desired outcomes. In 2020, there were 200 trees replanted and by 2021 the total number of newly planted trees went up to 600 trees. Sustainably managing Brunei Darussalam's peatlands and peat swamp forests remains a national priority for the country as it plays an important role in reforestation, biodiversity protection, and combating extreme climate changes.

Heart of Borneo

The Government is committed to the implementation of the Heart of Borneo (HOB) initiative, a programme that promotes a sustainable approach to forest management. Brunei Darussalam continues to develop or implement projects under this initiative, including Carbon Exchange and Forest Dynamics of Tropical Peat Forests, developing a

Biodiversity Action Plan, conducting a study of Hydrology, Forest Recovery and Fire Risk, and developing an effective Peatland Monitoring System. For this initiative, the Government has allocated 58 per cent of its total land area for project implementation and other needs, reiterating its commitment to a sustainable forest management.

Biodiversity and Wildlife Protection

Brunei Darussalam is currently reviewing the Wildlife Protection Act 1984 to reflect emerging concerns of trafficking and poaching of protected wildlife species in the country. The country is looking deeper into this issue to prepare a Biodiversity Order which will act as a legal instrument for the conservation and management of biodiversity in the country. The proposed Order emphasises the importance of biodiversity conservation, bio-prospecting, and promoting partnerships for efficient and sustainable management of biological resources. The Government has also made provisions for surveillance and patrolling activities to deter wildlife hunting and trading.

partnerships with academia and researchers ensure that the Government receives expert advice and guidance, rooted in science and data when formulating policies and acts concerning biodiversity and wildlife protection. To support this initiative further, the Government continues to strengthen its quarantine service and regulating entry for potential invasive species.

The Wild Fauna and Flora Order (2007) is a legal instrument that protects the country's biodiversity against invasive species. The country has actively pursued key strategies to prevent alien invasive species. Close collaboration and sustained

Initiatives and acts for biodiversity and wildlife protection have contributed to major achievements in this area. Brunei Darussalam has consistently scored 0.85 on the Red List Index every year¹³. Three new species were discovered in Brunei Darussalam recently. They are the two new species in freshwater mussels and one semi-slug 'Snug' discovered in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Brunei Darussalam continues to protect and preserve its rich biodiversity.

Partnerships on Regional and Global Level

Brunei Darussalam is an active member of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organisation (AFoCO), which serves as a platform for solution-sharing and capacity building.

Through this platform, the country is able to constantly upskill and develop technical expertise in its people in areas related to sustainable forest management and climate change.

¹³Red List of Threatened Species, International Union for Conservation of Nature. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/assessment/red-list-index>

Leveraging on this relationship, in 2022, Brunei Darussalam sent one public service officer to attend the AFoCO Fellowship programme designed to build expertise and capacity during its six-month tenure in an intergovernmental organisation. Furthermore, two students from UBD participated in its Science and Technology Exchange Partnership Program in 2019 and 2021.

Brunei Darussalam, as ASEAN Chair for 2021, reaffirmed its commitment towards biodiversity conservation in the region and enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation in support of developing the Global Biodiversity Framework. The Government continues to engage in dialogues and meetings at the international and regional level in areas that concern forest management and wildlife conservation. Brunei Darussalam continues to foster partnerships and close collaborations, as well as keeping the sustainable agenda at the forefront of ASEAN development.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For Goal 15, the lack of information and data availability in forest resources and wildlife management remains challenging for an evidence-based approach towards policy making and planning. As we move towards sustainability, there is a greater need for more data and information in order to address issues stemming from unsustainable practices such as forest degradation and loss of habitat.

Since the implementation of BNCCP, tree planting programmes have encouraged the participation from all levels of stakeholders. However, conducting the tree planting and reforestation activities became a challenge especially throughout lockdown period of COVID-19. MPRT reported that this has impacted the achievements of annual tree planting target where only 33,507 trees planted out of the 44,310 targeted (75.6 per cent) in 2021.

Similarly, public awareness programmes and community outreach were significantly affected due to COVID-19 restrictions imposed. Field works and research studies such as the study of hydrology were largely affected, putting an abrupt halt to restoration efforts. However, this setback allows the country to double its efforts moving forward to ensure the targets under Goal 15 will still be met, underlining further the urgency to strengthen partnerships and increase collaboration.

To effectively implement sustainable modes of management and practices, there needs to be a holistic approach towards integrating sustainable principles and values into the way of life in the country. A more robust whole-of-nation approach towards embedding sustainable values into the society is crucial.

FEATURE 15.1

Biodiversity Protection and Preservation

The Institute for Biodiversity and Environmental Research (IBER), UBD, is a centre for biodiversity and environmental research. The centre supports research projects and produces papers and studies on natural science disciplines including ecology, forest dynamics and medicinal plants, and physiology. Researchers under IBER have conducted numerous studies on Brunei Darussalam and its ecology and have identified key opportunities for Brunei Darussalam to be a model for biodiversity protection towards Goal 15 achievements in the country.

Build on current initiatives and key policies:

IBER highlights that Brunei Darussalam has made major strides to halt forest degradation and biodiversity loss. National plans and policies like National Forest Policy, BNCCP, and the commitment towards the HoB initiative have made significant progress in addressing the challenge of deforestation and forest degradation. To further accelerate its progress towards Goal 15, Brunei Darussalam must build upon these key policies and initiatives, and concurrently explore and establish new initiatives that can further mitigate the loss of biodiversity and the impacts of climate change. 41 per cent of Brunei Darussalam's land area are protected areas. This is a significant step towards biodiversity preservation. To ensure long-term stability, protected areas could be expanded to include additional areas of pristine forests, such as the peat swamps in some districts.

Awareness efforts to be doubled: Brunei Darussalam must continue its efforts to raise more awareness around biodiversity awareness, sustainability, and climate change. The majority of climate-related NGOs are youth-led. Stronger partnerships and close collaborations are required to double efforts in promoting and embedding values in Brunei Darussalam including organising sustainability events, promoting sustainability awareness campaigns, and providing opportunities for people to participate in biodiversity and sustainability-related dialogues and projects.

Mobilise youths as biodiversity champions:

There are also opportunities to mobilise youths to drive sustainable development in this area. Higher education institutions play a key role by offering courses on sustainability, biodiversity and climate change, and increasing research on these areas which helps equip young people in Brunei Darussalam with the knowledge for biodiversity protection and the richness and benefits of the ecosystem.

Increased funding for research activities and monitoring systems:

Science is crucial for achieving sustainable development. Dedicated funding to support research studies and projects in this area will aid the country in an evidence-based approach to policy making. This will require collaboration between government agencies, academia, NGOs, and the private sector to ensure that the best available science is used to inform policy decisions. Sustained research funding and political willpower are critical to drive these research efforts. Monitoring systems for Goal 15 must also be strengthened to better understand the state of ecosystems in the country and track progress towards sustainable development. This helps ensure the country is best positioned to continue protecting its biodiversity and its achievements towards Goal 15.

Brunei Darussalam has the potential to drive for more progress under Goal 15. Data and information availability, partnerships and collaborative efforts, and a stronger link between sustainability values and strategies are required to accelerate change in this area. By addressing the drivers of deforestation, strengthening protected areas, promoting sustainable daily practices, and investing in research and monitoring, Brunei Darussalam can help protect its unique biodiversity while contributing to global efforts to combat climate change and halt biodiversity loss.

FEATURE 15.2

NGO for Wildlife Protection

BruWILD, a biodiversity and National History Society, is a youth-led NGO where passionate biologists from different naturalist fields such as ecology, mammal study and marine biology create a collective force for the protection of biodiversity in Brunei Darussalam. BruWILD aids the nation in its wildlife protection efforts through education programmes and campaign awareness projects. The group works closely with other NGOs, government agencies, private firms, and external partners to help in making strides in national wildlife conservation and protection efforts.

BruWILD continues to raise awareness on conservation issues in the country through the publication of a nature-based education kit that is readily available for download on its website. The group intends to roll out more publications on the biodiversity wealth of Brunei Darussalam. Their next project will showcase Brunei Darussalam's fern species in the publication of 'Ferns of Brunei'. BruWILD has also produced two documentaries titled 'Tiny Heroes of Our Sea' and 'Mangroves of Brunei', educating further on Brunei Darussalam's ecosystem and its importance to the planet. The project also aims to document the country's rich natural heritage.

BruWILD is actively engaging communities for direct action to help deliver a sustainable country. The 'Save Our Ocean Project' explores marine related issues such as marine debris and combating climate change, which is achieved through educational campaigns. This project leverages like-minded NGOs that are also making a difference where the environment is concerned. The programme is also supported by both private and public sectors.

Through the years of working in the biodiversity field, BruWILD has a good understanding of areas that are opportune for Brunei Darussalam, especially in making progress in Goal 15. The organisation calls for action from the individual to institutions to collaborate and be more involved in this cause. Data collection and information availability have to be strengthened to ensure discussions in this area are fact-based and strategic.

Below are flagship programmes organised and conducted by BruWILD:

Eco-Edu Programme: This project introduces students at the primary and secondary level to issues relating to the environment and ecosystems as supplemental resource in schools. The Eco-Edu projects include complete visual materials on wildlife protection as well as visits to natural sites.

Little Eco Pahlawan: This is a six-month programme targeted to primary school children where they are engaged in activities that are based on selected themes of habitat protection and biodiversity protection. This programme is a joint effort with lower education institutions to inculcate sustainability values in the younger generation.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16

Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

As the Abode of Peace, Brunei Darussalam places high importance on the peace and security of its people and the nation. Safeguarding the stability of the country and the existing social harmony is, therefore, a priority. Brunei Darussalam has continued efforts to ensure peace, justice and uphold strong institutions and has taken a whole-of-nation approach to upholding peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all whilst building effective, accountable, and strong institutions.

Brunei Darussalam’s dual legal system – Civil and *Syariah* – are well placed to protect society from harm and injustice. The civil service is the government’s administrative machinery to uphold the supreme authority of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, uphold the National Philosophy – *Melayu Islam Beraja*, ensure the development of the country and ensure the welfare of the people as well as its traditional role as the peacekeeper, law enforcer, regulator, and service provider. COVID-19 pandemic has caused several challenges, however, the government acted

swiftly and with the introduction of the necessary amendments to the Infectious Diseases Act and enabling the courts to continue operating subject to guidelines set out by MOH. These actions enabled the country to uphold its peace and ensured the safety and security of its people despite the difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brunei Darussalam made good progress in maintaining the peace and security of the country. The number of intentional homicide cases and the number of detected victims of human trafficking remains low as Brunei Darussalam increased its commitment to protect vulnerable groups and combat human trafficking and exploitation. More efforts need to be made to address the proportion of unsentenced detainees and ensure prudent spending by the government. Upholding strong institutions enables Brunei Darussalam to make encouraging progress in people’s satisfaction with public services, safeguarding children’s rights through birth registration, and population representativity in public institutions despite limited data.

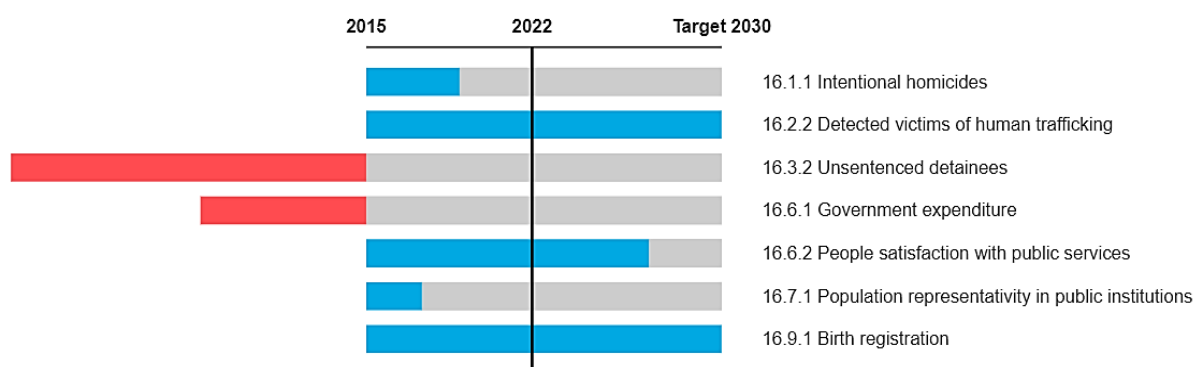


Figure 27 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 16

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Protection of Vulnerable Groups from Violence, Abuse, and Exploitation (Including Trafficking)

Brunei Darussalam’s laws provide protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children. Provisions provided under the Penal Code (Cap.22), the *Syariah* Penal Code Order 2013, Women and Child Protection Act (Cap.120), Children and Young Persons Act (Cap. 219), Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (Cap. 230) and Prevention of People Smuggling Order provide the basis for protection from violence, abuse and exploitation for vulnerable groups. Since the last VNR, the protection of these vulnerable groups, in particular children, has improved. Notable initiatives include the introduction of the National Framework on Child Protection (NFCP) in December 2020, which aspires to provide all children the right to live in a healthy environment to achieve their full potential.

The launch of the NFCP also saw the establishment of a Register of Child and Young Persons in Needs of Protection (RCYPNP) in May 2022. The RCYPNP facilitates inter-agency monitoring of children or young people if in need of immediate protection.

Brunei Darussalam has also intensified its commitment to combatting trafficking in persons (TIP) and the exploitation of people. The establishment of a National Committee on TIP at PMO in January 2020 and the introduction of a National Plan of Action Against TIP in September 2020, which revolves around four key strategies, namely the protection of potential victims, raising awareness, strengthening inter-agency coordination and investigations and prosecutions. The completion of a National Standard Operating Procedure for TIP (NaSOP TIP) in January 2021 aims to ensure systematic identification and referral of TIP victims as well as ensuring their safety and well-being during investigation and prosecution. An intensification of screening by the respective agencies saw an increase of 142 investigations.

Further action followed with the ongoing prosecution of two cases under the Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order, 2004, and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (Cap. 230) in 2022.

In line with the government’s commitment to extend protection to victims, the government has designated a dedicated shelter for both male and female victims of trafficking. The shelter became operational in early 2023. Improvements have also been made to the existing framework, such as the *Talian Anak 121* and *Talian Kebajikan 141*, whereby their capacity to receive more calls has been upgraded.



Figure 28 The six pillars under the National Framework on Child Protection (NFCP)

Access to Justice

Access to justice ensures that everyone is able to be afforded protection and opportunity to seek justice. The responsibility to continue upholding this principle continues despite trying circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Courts adapted accordingly to health measures set out by the government and amendments were made to legislation to allow hearings online in the Supreme Court, Intermediate Courts, and Subordinate Courts. Arrangements for urgent applications including criminal or civil cases deemed suitable for video-conferencing were heard online through remote hearings. Thus, despite the challenge that COVID-19 pandemic posed, access to justice continued through online court hearings.

Providing access to justice, in particular to the underprivileged remains a priority. The Law Society of Brunei Darussalam holds a Legal Advice Clinic to allow the underprivileged to seek legal advice from members of the Law Society. Another example of such an effort is carried out by *Majlis Kesejahteraan Masyarakat* (MKM), which provided services to the socially and economically disadvantaged, enabling them to have access to free consultations and legal advice.

Other means of seeking justice as well as resolving disputes are also available in Brunei Darussalam. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as arbitration and mediation provide a cost-effective and quicker alternative to the longer and costlier litigation processes. The Brunei Darussalam Arbitration Centre has increasingly become active in

providing services in alternative dispute resolution and spreading awareness regarding alternative dispute resolution. A mechanism known as *Sulh* is also available within the *Syariah* Legal System, where disputing parties undergo mediation by a *Sulh* officer. If a settlement is agreed upon by the parties, then the settlement will be passed on to the *Syariah* Court to be endorsed as a court order.

Access to justice also involves raising awareness and sharing knowledge with society. Programmes and talks are regularly held both by government agencies and NGOs in order to raise awareness among society regarding the law. PMO holds an annual Law Seminar to provide government officers with a basic understanding of the law and current legal issues closely related to their duties and responsibilities, while enforcement agencies such as the Royal Brunei Police Force, Anti-Corruption Bureau, Narcotics Control Bureau and the Internal Security Department regularly hold roadshows as well as attending forums and talks as panelists in order to educate the public regarding existing laws and regulations and their rights in relation to those laws and regulations. Legal education in Brunei Darussalam has also expanded, with two institutions delivering undergraduate-level law courses. NGOs such as Project Women Brunei, Youth Against Slavery and *Persatuan MAWAR* also have a part to play in this matter; leading the way with legal talks, dialogues, and awareness projects. Project Women Brunei, in particular, reaches out to remote communities to raise awareness among rural communities.

Building Strong Institutions

Strong, effective, transparent, and accountable institutions are essential for sustainable development and critical for governments to deliver services to their citizens. Brunei Darussalam has developed a number of initiatives as a way to improve regulatory delivery, emphasising the importance of digitalisation in the public service and pursuing best practices to improve governance and management. This includes an emphasis on key elements such as Civil Service Vision for the 21st Century, *Rukun Akhlak* (moral pillars) and work ethics.

Tools and strategies used include Work Procedures Manual (WPM); *Tekad Pemedulian Orang Ramai* (TPOR) or the Client's Charter; Streamlining processes through Business Process Re-engineering (BPR); and Improving frontline delivery through the Customer Focus Survey (*Kaji Selidik Tumpuan Pelanggan* or KSTP). More recent initiatives include strengthening of Internal Audit Committees and the centralisation of Internal Audit Units.

The Government relies on a whole-of-nation approach that involves the participation of all government agencies in responding to crises. COVID-19 tested government institutions and their ability to function and adapt during a crisis. To minimise disruptions in service delivery and to ensure essential services are still operational even during the outbreak, business continuity plans (BCP) were put in place that allows for flexible working arrangements for all employees, including high-risk personnel. The National COVID-19 Steering Committee provided the overall direction of key actions and strategies. Representatives from relevant government agencies were assembled as part of a National Coordination Centre COVID-19 (N3C19) to coordinate the government response to

the pandemic including food delivery and logistics, and performing contact tracing.

MFA also worked closely with stakeholder agencies such as MPRT to ensure that Brunei Darussalam's food supply chains were still available and working closely with other countries to secure COVID-19 vaccine supplies. Enforcement and security agencies were also involved in movement control and logistical arrangements. There was also a rise in volunteers where *Sukarelawan Belia* (Youth Volunteers) assisted at hospitals, clinics and vaccination centres; assisting in food deliveries and logistics. As with other countries, Brunei Darussalam has now turned its attention towards recovery and to transition into life under new norms.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Several measures can be explored to expand access to justice such as promoting alternative dispute resolution methods and actively encouraging the legal fraternity to undertake pro bono cases.

Currently, Brunei Darussalam has two institutions that provide undergraduate law courses. This can be built upon by investing in legal education and professional development to enhance the quality of legal practitioners in Brunei Darussalam. This could involve updating and expanding the legal

curriculum, providing continuing education opportunities for lawyers and judges, and encouraging research and scholarship in legal studies.

With digitalisation increasingly on the rise in Brunei Darussalam, it is an opportunity for the civil service to explore more digital solutions that can streamline processes and improve efficiency, which, leads to higher customer satisfaction towards public services.

FEATURE 16

Welfare Home Complex for Protection and Care

The Welfare Home Complex was originally established in 1982 to provide temporary protection and care for individuals facing social problems and as a rehabilitation centre for young offenders. As part of protections afforded to women and children particularly those affected by abuse and violence, a separate Protection Unit was operational as of early 2023. The building carries the concept of a contemporary home with family values and safety as well as a comfortable environment. The building structure concept also takes into consideration the need of differently-abled individuals.



Welfare Home Complex in Belimbing

The complex aims to:

- Provide care and temporary shelter to residents until their case is resolved;
- Provide reform, guidance, and training to residents in order to become virtuous, disciplined, and viable individuals through programmes and training provided; and
- Help shape residents' identities with the self-belief as a provision before they return back to their families and the society, and to become individuals who can contribute to the people and country.

The complex provides services such as shelter, food and drink, clothing, daily goods, medical examinations, academic and religious education, vocational training, sports and recreation, character development training, and counselling.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 17

Strengthen The Means Of Implementation And Revitalize The Global Partnership For Sustainable Development

OVERVIEW OF TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Sustainable Development Goals cannot be fulfilled in isolation. It has always been shared responsibility and actions to address our global challenges. Before the pandemic, global efforts made a good stride toward sustainable development, positively impacting the global community. However, significant setbacks from the pandemic, global peace instability, and climate adversities have affected health, food, and economics. The global communities, however, did not withdraw from the partnership that has been built and continues to be strengthened constantly.

As part of the global community, Brunei Darussalam recognises the important role in complementing and contributing to the global course of action in attaining a sustainable world. Domestically, the Government remains committed to fostering whole-of-nation action, bringing in more non-governmental stakeholders to work towards a common cause. Internationally, cooperation continues to substantiate progress in sustainable development.

There has been uneven progress in achieving SDG17. Brunei Darussalam’s government revenue accounted for approximately 21 per cent of GDP based on 2021 data, far from reaching its 2030 target. The proportion of the domestic budget funded by domestic taxes has been volatile. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated internet use in Brunei Darussalam while fixed broadband subscriptions continue to grow steadily, reaching 22 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2022, up from eight subscriptions in 2015.

Brunei Darussalam recognised having national statistical legislation compliant with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. However, increasing demands for new data amid limited resources affect the implementation of national statistical plans. In terms of births and deaths registration, Brunei Darussalam recorded good progress, with a 99.9 per cent registration rate over the period between 2015 to 2021.

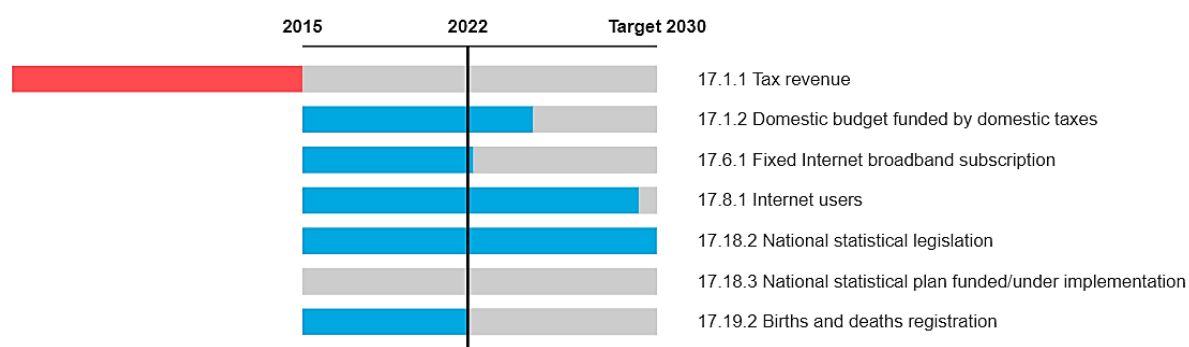


Figure 29 Progress of Selected Indicators in Goal 17

INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Financing for Development

To foster the desired partnerships between Government, the Private sector, and Civil society, the Government of Brunei Darussalam remains committed to strengthening and mobilising resources locally and abroad to advance shared goals. Considering the complementarities of SDGs to *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, national efforts to further improve the conducive ecosystem for more sustainable partnership. Since 2020, Brunei Darussalam has made notable efforts locally and abroad to facilitate effective mobilisation of resources. In order to maximise the use of resources from both the public and private sectors, including in supporting efforts to achieve fiscal sustainability for the country and improve the quality of public services by bringing in private sector expertise and innovation, PPP is one of the alternative financing sources that Brunei Darussalam actively promotes and encourages. In order to direct PPP projects in Brunei Darussalam, MOFE, through the Special Committee for Corporatisation and Public Private Partnership has released the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Guidelines in March 2022.

Another potential means of attracting public and private capital is through issuing bonds. BDCB has

issued a total of BND 100 million sukuk at a rental rate of 0.25 per cent. With the issuance, the government has thus far distributed over BND 15.10 billion worth of short-term *Sukuk Al-Ijarah* securities since the maiden offering on 6 April 2006. The total holdings of the Government of Brunei Darussalam *Sukuk* outstanding as of 13 January 2022 stood at BND 270 million. Although no specific SDG-related bond has been issued, the possibility of using *Sukuk* can be explored. Despite having a small financial market, financial institutions in Brunei Darussalam have embraced financial technology (fintech) to expand their reach to the public and provide consumer access to financial services and remain competitive in the new operating environment. The ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office's (AMRO) Annual Consultation Report on Brunei Darussalam in the year 2022 highlights the remarkable progress in Brunei Darussalam's fintech ecosystem, which have stemmed from government initiatives towards expanding the digital economy, as well as the rising demand for digital financial services in the country. Fintech can drive innovative financial solutions, which can make financial services more efficient and less costly while promoting financial inclusion.

Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship

Brunei Darussalam promotes sustainable development through multilateral frameworks, particularly through ASEAN. Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship in the year 2021 achieved several significant outcomes such as follows:

- *COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund*. Initiated by Brunei Darussalam during its Chairmanship, ASEAN, through the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, procured COVID-19 vaccines for the people of ASEAN. ASEAN Leaders at the 38th ASEAN Summit adopted the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), aimed at better coordination of ASEAN processes across all three ASEAN Community pillars, to deliver a more effective and timely response to future crises, emergencies and disasters in the region. This includes working

towards strengthening and expanding the role of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC) beyond the scope of natural disasters. ASEAN is also working towards the establishment of a platform that will enable the people of ASEAN to contribute to natural disasters relief efforts through the review of the Financial Rules of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund;

- *Mental Health*. Brunei Darussalam is working closely with Dialogue Partners through the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Plus Three (APT) platforms to promote cooperation in mental health. Two Leaders' statements were adopted, namely the EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation and APT Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on Mental

Health Amongst Adolescents and Young Children. As a follow-up to the EAS Leaders' Statement, Brunei Darussalam and Australia co-hosted the EAS Workshop on Mental Health Cooperation from 22 to 23 November 2021. The Workshop provided an opportunity for policymakers, practitioners, and mental health experts to share their insights, exchange best practices and national experiences on mental health policymaking, and explore solutions with civil society actors;

- *Youth.* Brunei Darussalam also places great emphasis on the youths, establishing the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP) with the ASEAN Secretariat. The first cohort successfully completed the programme in September 2022, where all 13 participants were attached to the ASEAN Secretariat to enhance their knowledge, skills, and fostering network. ASEAN also adopted the Joint Statement on Promoting the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda at the 28th ASEAN Regional Forum to enhance the capacity of youths towards advancing the Agenda;
- *Climate Change.* As part of its commitment to address climate change in the region, Brunei Darussalam is currently working towards establishing the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) in Bandar Seri Begawan. Once established, the Centre will become a regional hub for knowledge and research which will assist ASEAN Member States in developing national policies that are related to Climate Change issues;

- *Blue Economy.* During the 38th ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Leaders also adopted the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy, which recognises the emerging significance of the concept and the recognition that oceans and seas are key drivers of economic growth and innovation and the need to ensure environmental sustainability. Brunei Darussalam successfully organised the ASEAN Workshop on the Blue Economy in June 2021 to further ASEAN's understanding of the Concept;
- *Circular Economy.* During the 38th ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Leaders also adopted the framework for Circular Economy, framing ASEAN's understanding and priorities on circular economy as well as providing a crucial link between ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community;
- *Launch Negotiation of an ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement.* Canada remains an important trading partner of ASEAN, and commencing negotiations on an FTA would be timely to signal both sides' continued commitment to a rules-based multilateral trading system; and
- *Post COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism.* The Recovery Plan provides comprehensive, practical, and coordinated solutions for ASEAN to enhance sustainability, resilience, climate-smart, gender, and social inclusiveness in the ASEAN tourism industry during and post-pandemic.

International Partnership

Brunei Darussalam has gained valuable bilateral, regional, and global cooperation, earning benefits from knowledge sharing, regional projects, international agreements, reducing developmental gaps, and facilitating growth through trade and investment. Brunei Darussalam is exploring ways to support the implementation of Goal 17 with other countries, including strengthening the implementation mechanism and expanding SDGs implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic emphasised the interconnectedness of the global community, not only in the economy but in the social aspect of life. Each country has an obligation to stabilise and strengthen interlinkages and play a

part in ensuring the global community is sustainable and remains resilient in the long run. Brunei Darussalam continues to play its role in maintaining the livelihood of the global community especially neighbouring countries.

The total number of countries with diplomatic relations with Brunei Darussalam is 172, which includes new diplomatic relations with two countries, namely the Republic of Dominica and the Republic of Rwanda. Brunei Darussalam also provides humanitarian assistance to various countries, such as through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and the United Nations,

including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Brunei Darussalam has also contributed medical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic as follows:

- 50 Oxygen concentrators, 10 ventilators, and 20 patient monitors to Indonesia;
- 10 ventilators and 1,200 units of PCR Test Kits to Malaysia;
- 20 units of COVID-19 detection kits (equivalent to 1,000 tests) and 2,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines and donation of USD 100,000 to the Philippines following the Typhoon Odette in December 2021; and
- Donation of USD 500,000 to Hubei Charity Foundation, China.

In 2019, Brunei Darussalam contributed to the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (the AHA Centre) to support ASEAN's collective effort in building the ASEAN Resilient Village in disaster-affected areas in Central Sulawesi following the powerful earthquake and tsunami that hit the province in late September 2018. The Government of Brunei Darussalam facilitated the fundraising, while the cash donation collectively came from the individual contributions of the people of Brunei Darussalam. The ASEAN Village, consisting of 100 permanent houses, one mosque, and one auxiliary health centre, was launched in June 2021.

In terms of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), several activities have been initiated whereby Brunei Darussalam made a financial contribution through a public fund called *Dana Bantuan Kemanusiaan Rakyat Palestin di Tebing Barat* by MORA. The contribution represented Brunei Darussalam's multi-year contribution for five years. The Government and the Ghanim International Cooperation handed over 115,860 food packets to UNRWA for Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip. Two 40 feet containers from Brunei Darussalam were shipped to Palestine. Brunei Darussalam has also actively engaged in peacekeeping missions since 1992, including through the United Nations' ambit. Since the first VNR, Brunei Darussalam has participated in the

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and International Monitoring Team in Mindanao (IMT).

The Government also actively extends technical assistance overseas in collaboration with international organisations, such as the Commonwealth, including through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) and the Third Country Training Programme (BDTCTP). Through the BDTCTP, Brunei Darussalam has extended technical assistance to developing countries of the Commonwealth covering areas such as the Performance Management for Effective Implementation of SDGs and Environmental Sustainability and Management. The invitation was extended to several countries such as the Cook Islands, the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Maldives, Niue, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, the Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and the Republic of Vanuatu.

Brunei Darussalam continues to contribute to the CFTC annually to ensure the Commonwealth Secretariat can continue providing technical assistance to countries in need. Implementation of the BDTCTP has been suspended, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as projects under BDTCTP are provided through Brunei Darussalam's institutions. The travel restrictions in place during the pandemic have affected the provision of these projects. However, Brunei Darussalam remains committed to the BDTCTP and plans to restart the programme in the near future.

Other than technical assistance, Brunei Darussalam also offers scholarships for foreign nationals to undertake studies at participating higher education institutions in the country, namely UBD, UTB, UNISSA, Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPU SB), and Politeknik Brunei. Since 1995, more than 600 scholarships have been awarded to applicants from 72 countries, including from ASEAN, the Commonwealth, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). For the Academic Session 2023/2024, more than 7,000 applications (68 per cent rise in applications compared to the year 2022) have been received and are being considered by the higher educational institutions in Brunei Darussalam¹⁴.

¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Commitment to Open Trade

With a small population and a developing economy, Brunei Darussalam prioritises bilateral and multilateral trading partnerships for economic development and prosperity. Brunei Darussalam remains committed to strengthening a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, and fair multilateral trading system.

Currently, Brunei Darussalam is a party to ten Free Trade Agreements and continues to be an active member of international organisations such as ASEAN and World Trade Organisation (WTO) as well as sub-regional initiatives such as the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). Under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Pillar, Brunei Darussalam collaborates with other ASEAN Member States to advance sustainability, including in areas under Indonesia's 2023 Priority Economic Deliverables such as in the development of ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality, Implementation Plan for Circular Economy, ASEAN Blue Economy, Version 2 of ASEAN Sustainable Finance Taxonomy, and the Development of a Regional Ecosystem on Electric Vehicle. Additionally, ASEAN+1 FTAs, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), not only provides opportunities for tariff liberalisation for goods and market access for services and investment, but it also provides

valuable opportunities for mutually beneficial economic cooperation in areas of sustainable development.

Brunei Darussalam's ratification of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on the 13 May 2023 and the subsequent entry into force on 12 July 2023 will also provide a platform for advancing sustainability through the chapter on Environment. Furthermore, Green Economy is also an implementation priority for CPTPP Parties, whereby it has been outlined as a priority for the chairmanship of Singapore and New Zealand in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Parties will continue to collaborate in areas of mutual interest by sharing best practices and experiences to advance sustainability cooperation among CPTPP Parties.

Brunei Darussalam is also undertaking internal consultation to ratify the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement as soon as possible. Among others, the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement aims to realise indicator 14.6 of the UN SDGs for eliminating subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. As a member of the WTO since 1995, Brunei Darussalam also benefits from access to technical assistance and capacity-building activities organised by the WTO Secretariat.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges from emerging regional and global developments that are interconnected and cutting across borders, such as digital commerce, sustainability, climate change, and public health, remain. Coupled with global economic and political uncertainties, achieving the SDGs demand stronger partnerships to build a more robust enabling environment to support SDGs implementation within the country and the global community.

On this note, Brunei Darussalam will, among others, continue to help promote regional and global peace, security, stability, and prosperity based on friendship, mutual respect, and peaceful co-

existence, recognising the equality of all nations, adhering to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and advocating the peaceful settlement of disputes.

There is also a realisation that more efforts need to be made to strengthen SDG implementation by improving participation at the local level and promoting more contributions on all levels. For the remaining seven years, Brunei Darussalam has the opportunities to make existing mechanisms more effective especially developing a whole-of-nation approach toward supporting the SDG Agenda.

FEATURE 17

Financial Institution Supporting the National Commitment to Sustainable Development

Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD), the largest financial institution in Brunei Darussalam, displays an exemplary commitment to leading sustainable values in the community through various incentives and activities to help meet the national goals of *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and the 17 SDGs. The BIBD Sustainability Framework is guided by a set of sustainability principles that are intertwined in BIBD's overall business strategy through three pillars: i) Environmental Protection; ii) Responsible Entrepreneurship; and iii) Inclusive Social Impact.

BIBD Investment Towards Sustainable Change

Addressing global challenges require investment and collective action. BIBD has committed BND 2 billion towards sustainability funding by 2030 to fund empowerment and education programmes and supports youth-driven initiatives to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. Staying true to the 'Leaving No One Behind' principles, flagship programmes such as BIBD ALAF and BIBD SEED focused on human capital development to assist underprivileged men, women, and children towards self-empowerment and self-sustainability.



Partnerships as the foundation for BIBD's Sustainable Nation Campaign

The BIBD group looks to collaborate with various levels of stakeholders utilising the whole-of-nation approach to effect a host of SDGs. Programmes such as SME360 have seen successful partnerships with multi-stakeholders addressing important national issues, including zero waste and climate change. Notable actions include BIBD Securities launch of its first ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance) fund, which enables partnerships with environmental-focused NGOs to conduct climate-related activities. To support community development - The Community for Brunei was launched, providing a digital platform that supports and protects small and micro businesses and community development by facilitating partnerships and collaborations while raising awareness of sustainable issues.

Further reiterating its commitments towards SDGs for Brunei Darussalam, BIBD Asset Management became the first financial institution in the country to be recognised as a signatory to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investing (UN PRI). UN PRI works to promote the incorporation of ESG in its investment decision-making. BIBD continues to advocate and celebrate the importance of partnerships when finding solutions to complex and rich development challenges, affirming this belief via its many impactful collaborative projects.



PART III

YOUTH

*Supporting the
SDGs*



YOUTH AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The key messages from the recent Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC) Youth Forum in April 2023 reinforces the importance of engaging the youth in achieving the SDGs. Young people of the world are concerned with the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Therefore, the link between Youth and the SDGs is well-established and universally recognised. They play an important role in monitoring, reviewing and implementing the Agenda as well as the overall accomplishments of the SDGs. Their ability to be critical thinkers forge

action-oriented partnerships, and generally possess the energy, creativity and ability to make connections. This has enabled them to be powerful and crucial tools in the journey towards 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a result, the second VNR process prompted the country to carry out efforts which help determine the contributions of young people in SDG implementation in Brunei Darussalam and to continue to explore avenues which allow young constituents to contribute to the sustainable development agenda meaningfully.

Youth Involvement in Sustainable Development in Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam recognises youths as crucial partners in national development and their important role in shaping the future of the country. Such recognition was reflected in His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's Statement during the SDG Summit in 2015:

“ It is especially crucial for our youth to be included because they stand to inherit this new agenda

More recently, during the ASEAN Leaders' Interface with Representatives of ASEAN Youth in Indonesia, His Majesty the Sultan Dan Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam encouraged ASEAN to continue providing opportunities for the youth to harness their potential and contribute towards achieving the SDGs, as well as in realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025:

“ Youth participation as a major force for sustainable development, and a key agent for social change, economic growth, and technological innovation

Brunei Darussalam recognises the role of youths as agents of change for both economic and sustainable development. Over the years, the country has witnessed a rise of youth-led movements within the Government, NGOs and businesses that are anchored by ideals of sustainable and inclusivity values. In their own way, young people are already actively contributing towards *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and SDGs. The session below explores in detail how the young people of Brunei Darussalam have been making contributions towards positive developments on the community, national, regional and international level.

Getting Involved: Youth Participation on the Community, National and International Levels

International and Regional Participation

Youths in Brunei Darussalam are involved in a number of international and regional platforms as a space for speaking out their concerns and advocating for issues that are obstacles to sustainable development. For example, ASEAN

Youth Advocates Network (AYAN) Brunei, an ASEAN youth-led organisation promoting ASEAN identity through advocacy and community engagement, held a three-day virtual programme 'ASEANYouCan' in 2021, as part of the ASEAN Youth on Climate

Action initiative. The objective of the forum is to raise awareness of innovative green technologies and green practices in the country and in the region, covering various subjects including two subtopics titled 'Youth in Promoting Green Innovation and Nature-based Solutions' and 'Education and Creating Green Society'. From this programme, the 'ASEANYouCan' delegates shared the 'Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on ASEAN Youth Climate Action' statement at the 16th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment calling for a strengthened regional climate action.

In the same year, the ASEAN Secretariat hosted an interactive webinar to commemorate ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day, where the event emphasised on prioritising youth's participation and empowerment, considering the crucial part they play in realising a climate-friendly and disaster-resilient ASEAN. Joshua Anak Belayan from 'ASEANYouCAN' Brunei Darussalam, acted as one of the three youth representatives in the meeting, where by the end of the webinar, a six call-to-action points were delivered including the provision for more inclusive, democratic and safe platforms and accesses for youth to policy-making spaces and decision-making forums.

The examples above highlights how youths of Brunei Darussalam utilises platforms on the regional and international level as a means to get involved and enhance their capacity and accessibility towards policy recommendations. The platforms also serve as a way to promote and recognise young people's contributions to climate actions and disaster-resilience, and the crucial role they continue to play in alleviating crises caused by climate change. Continued access and empowering young people

through high-level engagements will ensure continuous youth engagement on current issues, and leveraging on their role as positive drivers of change for the nation and the global world.

The recognition for young people's role and contributions to national and regional development efforts continue with the awarding of accolades and prizes bestowed upon young people of Brunei Darussalam for their many contributions to different causes. The founder of youth-led NGO Hand4Hand, Iqbal Damit, was awarded the ASEAN Prize 2022 for his contributions towards humanitarian relief as well as advocating for volunteerism in the region. Two sisters, Sarinah Zizumiza and Nursheila Ziziumiza, founders of Rumine Corporation, were awarded gold in the Digital Content category of the ASEAN ICT Awards (AICTA) 2021 for their development of Virtual Augmented Reality (VAR) training application promoting sustainable farming. Another youth leader, Pengiran Haji Ahmad Fadillah Akhbar, founder of *Projek Bina Ukhwah*, a youth-led movement that seeks to support underprivileged families through mentoring and empowerment programme was awarded the coveted Queen's Young Leaders Award in 2018.

Young people in the country have shown their involvement for positive social and sustainable development efforts through advocacy programmes at the regional and international levels, and volunteering activities, which earned them international recognition and accolades. These instances demonstrate how young people of Brunei Darussalam and their collective activities have been a positive conduit and a powerful force for positive social changes in Brunei Darussalam and the rest of the world.

National Participation

At the national level, there are mechanisms in place to increase the rate of young people's involvement. There has been youth representation in the Legislative Council, with some members appointed as youth representatives, tasked to bring forward young people's concerns and perspectives to law-making and national planning. Having representation at this level is crucial, not only allowing young people to feel more involved in the process, but that they are important stakeholders in nation-building efforts. This is also a display of commitment from the Government to listen to the voice of the youth. Making this process more

inclusive for young people leads to greater youth empowerment and enhance their capacity as drivers of change. The *Majlis Belia Brunei* or Brunei Youth Council (BYC) acts as an umbrella youth group for young people in Brunei Darussalam. The Council provides a platform for young constituents to develop their capacity for action, and elevating their involvement in national development. They were a key stakeholder in the consultation process for the development of the National Youth Policy and Strategy 2020-2035. The policy was subsequently use as a referential framework for high-level national masterplans.

Government agencies such as MCYS also regularly co-organise the inaugural Youth Town Hall Brunei with Young Professional Network (YPN) as a platform to bridge the gap between young constituents in Brunei Darussalam with policymakers. This dialogue gives young people a platform to speak up, mobilise themselves, and be held accountable for SDG achievements in the

country. The dialogue sessions take place annually with Cabinet Ministers as panel speakers. Sustained and consistent gatherings such as those mentioned help keep young people engaged with the SDGs and other stakeholders, build stronger trust and relations and build their capacity to lead the charge for sustainable development.

National Youth Policy and Strategy 2020-2035

Dasar Belia Negara dan Strategi 2020-2035 (DBNS) or the National Youth Policy and Strategy 2020-2035 was developed through extensive consultation with a network of stakeholders. The document highlights issues and concerns in relation to youth development in Brunei Darussalam and proposes suggested actions to achieve these objectives.



DBNS is used as a referential framework when forming policies and strategies in development projects. This marks an important milestone for the country as *DBNS* represents a process where young people were directly consulted, participated and integrated into the decision-making process. Outlining the goals and strategies of long-term youth development, the vision of the *DBNS* is to develop value-driven world-class youths, who are future-ready agents of change for national development and rooted in inclusivity. This policy ultimately aims to address pertinent challenges, encouraging the active participation of youth in society as well as inculcating entrepreneurship towards achieving the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. There are four core strategies and 16 initiatives outlined within the youth policy. Amongst the core strategies were education, employability and decent work, which put emphasis on equipping the nation's youth with the skills and knowledge needed for the fourth industrial revolution. In addition to that, there is also a core strategy that addresses inclusive National Development, which puts focus on providing a fair opportunity for all of Brunei's youth to participate in the country's development.

Community Involvement

Majority of the SDG-related activities conducted by young people in the country such as awareness-raising and project implementations are driven by volunteerism. Volunteerism allows individuals to self-organise their own activities and make decisions for themselves. It is an effective means of SDG implementation as its value-add comes from the ability for greater and deeper engagement with marginalised or under-represented communities. This type of engagement is essential in the pursuit of leaving no one behind.

The NGO Eco Ponies Garden, for example, focuses on integrating indigenous communities in Brunei Darussalam into society and enhancing their capabilities for economic participation. One of its programmes, the Community Kitchen Project, aims to empower local communities by utilising their knowledge of plants and medicinal herbs found in Brunei Darussalam's forests as a means to generate income. This close relationship between Eco Ponies Garden and local communities builds confidence, trust, and transparency with one another, which enables factors for effective engagements.

Youth volunteers have shown that volunteering efforts can lead to collective action through shared interests and values. This is exemplified in the case of Green Brunei, a youth-led platform that is committed to environmental sustainability, where the organisation frequently hosts beach clean-up, waste-collecting, and tree-planting activities. Utilising their network of volunteers, the group regularly collaborates with other stakeholders such as government, schools and education institutes, private firms, and other NGOs alike causing a bigger impact. For example, Green Brunei organised a river clean-up activity with Mitsubishi Corporation, attended by government officials, the local community, and school children. This merging of like-minded people in the spirit of volunteerism oversaw the collection of over 400 kilogrammes of trash. To date, Green Brunei has organised 245 events, planted 1,958 new trees, collected over 46,000 kilogrammes of trash, and engaged with 18,202 volunteers through their programmes.

Despite its many activities and achievements thus far, volunteering activities are typically standalone and not part of a wider movement. In response to this, MCYS has taken steps to develop a Native Mobile Application (*Mengalinga*), with strategic partners UTB and Baiduri Bank, where its primary function is to provide a platform to enable event organisers and NGOs to promote volunteering opportunities and connect volunteers through the application. The mobile application launched in 2021, playing the role of the Government's national

center for volunteerism, promotes awareness talks, networking events with like-minded people, and links to NGOs and volunteering groups.

The link between volunteering activities in the country and SDGs need to be clearly established and closely linked to effectively measure achievements made from volunteering activities. Aside from that, mechanisms for effective reporting and data collection must be prepared and strengthened in order to record these achievements accurately. Measuring the impact of volunteering activities to specific SDG indicators will promote a more organised and coordinated volunteering efforts towards sustainable development.

Young people in Brunei Darussalam have been actively contributing towards national efforts in realising *Wawasan Brunei 2035* and implementing SDGs. This is reflected in the rise of a number of youth-led NGOs that are dedicated and focused on issues concerning sustainable development such as climate change, unemployment, and health and well-being. However, there are opportunities for increased youth involvement in the country's pursuit towards a sustainable nation by empowering young people. As a result, a conscious effort was included in the VNR process for gathering insights and perspectives from one of the most highly energetic, passionate and creative groups in the country through a targeted dialogue session with the youth, the SDG Youth Dialogue 2023.

SDG Youth Dialogue 2023

Youth's participation and contribution have been complementing the Government's various initiatives to implement SDGs, including on health, poverty, climate change, and environmental issues. There have been increased efforts to elevate these initiatives by empowering young people as agents of change that can contribute more to the SDGs. An inaugural SDG Youth Dialogue, organised by PMO as the Special National Coordination Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, with cooperation from the MCYS and BIBD. The programmes and activities were run by the Brunei Youth Council; Green Brunei; My Action for SDGs with the support of the UNRCO and the UNESCAP.

The dialogue was aimed at fostering the development and empowerment of future sustainability leaders and serves as a testament to Brunei Darussalam's commitment to harness the potential of its youth by nurturing a generation of visionary and innovative change agents who will shape a more sustainable future for all.

The dialogue brought together young people aged 15 to 25 to deliberate on the importance of the youth in achieving SDG and aimed at identifying specific opportunities to bring young people closer to supporting SDGs by promoting inclusiveness and meaningful youth engagement in SDG implementation, monitoring, and review, and identify solutions and create avenues for learnings and collaborations including building partnerships.

Throughout the programme, the participants demonstrated dedication and creativity as they engaged in constructive dialogues to offer innovative ideas and fresh perspectives on key issues - including environmental sustainability, social inclusion, economic growth, and quality education, among others. Advocating for youth empowerment, the participants highlighted the importance of intergenerational considerations and stressed the need for a holistic approach to achieving the SDGs.

The dialogue session focused on four key focus areas, namely education, environment, health, and jobs, as a basis for understanding youth's views and identifying areas of concern for the youths in Brunei Darussalam. Referring to *Figure 30*, topics were based on a selection of votes, Youths were most interested in Goal 4 and Goal 8. Meanwhile, Goal 3, Goal 13 and Goal 16 were goals which the youths were most concerned by, with Goal 1, Goal 5, and Goal 10 following close.

When youths were asked about their perspectives on sustainable development and their roles, as per *Figure 31*, most participants strongly agreed that youth and children should be involved in decision makings to advance SDGs in the country. Youths believed that technology is crucial in realising SDG achievements and that the country can only achieve sustainable development through a whole-of-nation approach. Young people recognised that the Government and private sectors have made efforts to advance sustainable development agenda, however, they felt that more needs to be done. There was a high level of agreement that the country is currently not on track to the SDGs targets.

The dialogue also explored the biggest concerns young people are facing today; whereby participants identified economic, environmental, and social aspects as key areas of concern. The biggest concerns identified by young people were

issues relating to Goal 8 such as unemployment, job-skill mismatch, and slow industry growth. Young people also highlighted concerns about deepening inequality, lack of inclusivity, and lack of opportunities, especially in connection to poverty, gender disparity and ageism. Young people are increasingly aware of the importance of their health, particularly mental health, as a barrier to their development.

Participants highlighted key areas and actions under education, environment, health, and jobs that require further improvements in order to support youth development and sustainable development for Brunei Darussalam.

Education. Participants recognised the importance of a quality education system in preparing the youth for challenges in the 21st century, particularly in the digital economy. Youths felt that the education system must adapt and reflect the demands of a green economy that is essential for achieving sustainable development. They called for efforts to enhance young people's basic understanding of SDGs through early introduction in the school curriculum from a young age. This will aid them in terms of knowledge application in driving sustainability in the country. Youths stated a desire for educational equity and accessibility through better provisions and building infrastructure that promotes inclusivity and accessibility. Finally, young people desired for the role of volunteerism to be recognised as a valuable force in driving sustainable change.

Environment. Young people highlighted the lack of climate literacy in school curriculums and dedicated financing for green projects and developments, especially in renewable energy. Youths, however, felt that there are opportunities to support green start-ups and social enterprises, moving towards a circular economy. Suggested actions that could help in realising green and sustainable nation, and

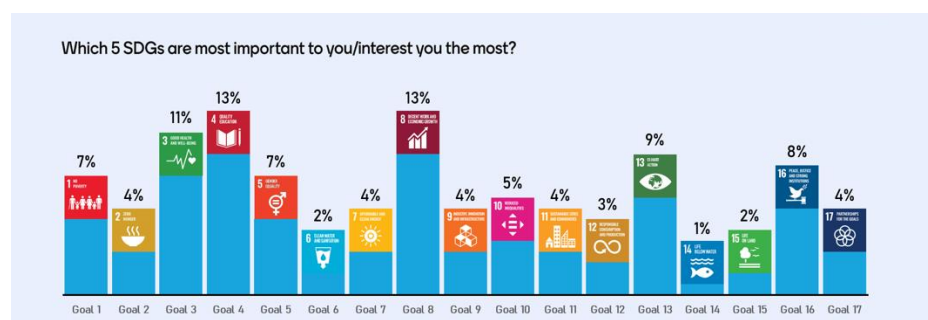


Figure 30 Voting outcome when youths are asked to choose top five SDGs that are most important to them

building on key initiatives that support environmentally-friendly businesses and sustainability projects, include the adoption of renewable energy; improving waste management that is eco-friendly, circular, and sustainable; supporting relevant agencies in data collection and improving the nation's data capacity through collaborations from researchers and volunteers; improving inclusivity policies in the country such as building accessibility; and engaging and empowering indigenous communities as stewards for the environment.

Health. The participants reiterated the importance of mental health and its effects when left untreated. There is a need to strengthen the healthcare system in Brunei Darussalam to reflect the needs of the 21st century, including dismantling the stigma around mental health. Young people can contribute in this area by conducting research and studies that provide a better understanding of mental health issues and advocate for support for mental health, especially in education institutions. Young people need to be exposed to opportunities in the healthcare system from a young age through volunteerism and auxiliary trainings such as first aid.

SDG Youth Statement

Youths in Brunei Darussalam demonstrated a keen interest and understanding of the SDGs and have significant concerns on issues related to deepening poverty, widening inequality, climate change risks, and rising unemployment and mental health cases. These issues are seen as barriers to youth development and achievement of the sustainable development agenda.



Figure 31 Rating outcome to understand the youth's perspective on SDGs (1: Strongly disagree; 5: Strongly agree)

The youths can play a part in improving the population's health through awareness-raising skills via social media and online platforms.

Jobs. The dialogue underscored the importance of having a growth mindset and proactive attitude when job-seeking, as well as continue to upskill and reskill to enhance their competitive edge in an evolving job market. Young people in Brunei Darussalam would like to see more jobs in underdeveloped sectors such as competitive sports and the creative industries.

The dialogue uncovered that numerous youths are already contributing to SDGs in their own way, and that young people require further support and capacity building to turn vision and ideas into action. One of the recommendations from the young people in Brunei Darussalam was that they require an effective and sustained platform to empower and mobilise them to build further on their current activities. Brunei Darussalam will continue to leverage partnerships with youths as a vehicle to accelerate actions towards the 2030 Agenda.



SDG YOUTH DIALOGUE

THEME

FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS

15th - 17th May 2023, Brunei Darussalam

SDG YOUTH STATEMENT

We, the Eighty-One (81) participants of the SDG Youth Dialogue, held on 15th to the 17th May 2023 at the Prime Minister's Office, Brunei Darussalam

Hereby

PP1. Recognising the importance of the education system to prepare youth for the challenges of today's digitalized age by equipping them with the necessary tools and skill sets to thrive in the digital economy. Additionally, civic education plays a vital role in instilling social values, patriotism, and civic duty. Adapting and reforming the education system for the green, modern economy is also essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

PP2. Acknowledging that the healthcare system in Brunei requires improvements in areas such as manpower, efficiency, and equitable access to healthcare. Addressing the stigma and lack of awareness surrounding mental health is crucial, considering the measurable indicators, challenges, and short and long-term consequences involved.

PP3. Expressing concern over the climate literacy disparity in the education sector and lack of financing channels to fund various green projects, such as renewable energy initiatives, green solution startups, social enterprises, and efforts towards a circular economy.

Hereby propose the following:

[HEALTH]

OP1. Promote youth engagement in the healthcare system by offering volunteering opportunities like first aid training and encouraging the use of digital media skills for content creation and raising awareness on health-related matters.





SDG YOUTH DIALOGUE

THEME

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OP2. Supporting the Mental Health Strategy by conducting research projects to identify indicators and consequences of declining mental health issues in Brunei Darussalam. Strengthening awareness of mental health issues to reduce its stigma through programmes that address various stages of support, including within the education system.

[JOBS]

OP3. To instil a growth mindset in the youth, emphasize proactive opportunity seeking and a focus on quality work recognized locally and internationally. Empower the youth to actively pursue continuous learning, upskilling, and reskilling, enhancing their adaptability and skills for the evolving job market. This comprehensive approach equips Brunei's youth for personal and professional growth.

OP4. Youth should advocate for increased support and sponsorships in overlooked fields such as sports, creative industries amongst others. Additionally, there is a need for industry diversification through international collaborations.

[EDUCATION]

OP5. Foster volunteerism into the next generation.

OP6. Incorporating SDG into formal education to strengthen students' knowledge and application towards current issues and instilling values and appreciation towards linguistic and cultural heritage to maintain national identity for future generations.

OP7. Reducing educational inequalities amongst different socio-economic backgrounds by providing more support and infrastructure, and to strengthen measures to address corruption.



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS





SDG YOUTH DIALOGUE
THEME
FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS
15th - 17th May 2023, Brunei Darussalam

[ENVIRONMENT]

OP8. Engaging the indigenous communities to facilitate knowledge sharing and acknowledge them of stewards of the environment

OP9. Supporting relevant agencies in data collection and reporting through workshops that educate people on how to collect standardised data, and by providing a platform for researchers and volunteers to collaborate to produce reliable reports.

OP10. Supporting sustainable initiatives, green businesses and educating others on the importance of investing in a sustainable future, including supporting the adoption of renewable energy sources

OP11. Better waste management practices and infrastructure and encouraging the implementation of a sustainable sewage system

OP12. Call for the revitalization and development of inclusive and reliable infrastructure to provide accessible services for the public.





PART IV

CONCLUSION
and the
Way Forward



LOOKING AHEAD: POST VNR AND BEYOND 2030

Brunei Darussalam has recorded progress across the 17 SDGs in its journey towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on national plans and efforts towards *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. For this reporting cycle, the VNR takes an evidence-based approach, focusing on building quantitative data on the implementation of SDGs and strengthening its SDG indicator database. The VNR consultative process was also expanded to include more multi-stakeholders from all sectors of the Brunei Darussalam's society, including private and business enterprises, banking and financial institutions, academia, volunteers, and youths.

Brunei Darussalam continues to strengthen its commitment towards the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development through strong alignment between its long-term development plans and the 17 SDGs, as well as the country's international commitments, such as the NDC submission in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

When reviewing Goal progress, Brunei Darussalam has made good progress, especially in Goal 6 and Goal 9, whereas Goal 12 is experiencing a negative trend. This is not an isolated experience for the country; the world is, too, experiencing either stunted or regressive trends in its SDG achievements. The SDG VNR review process has, however, allowed Brunei Darussalam to reflect on this experience and draw on lessons and best practices to assist in the next implementation phase.

Pre-2023 High Level Political Forum Workshop

To conclude the VNR Process for Brunei Darussalam, a Pre-2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) Workshop was held on 17 to 18 May 2023 organised by the PMO as the Special National Coordination Committee on the SDG for Brunei Darussalam (SNCC). The workshop, attended by the members and SNCC Secretariat as well as representatives from the Government, United Nations agencies, the private sector, NGOs, academic institutions, youth, and financial institutions; discussed preliminary findings from the second VNR Report for Brunei Darussalam which will be presented to the 2023 HLPF in July 2023. Various discussions also focused on the way forward which would help to accelerate the SDGs through post-VNR actions. This includes strengthening the SDG ecosystem, data availability and integrated actions for the SDGs.

The Pre-2023 HLPF workshop was also organised to bring together stakeholders to chart the way forward for the country. The session is built to achieve two outcomes: i) To share Brunei Darussalam's SDG progress so far and other findings

from the VNR process; and ii) To bring together diverse perspectives and experiences, and identify areas to improve for the next implementation stage.

The two-day workshop was attended by 86 participants, with 60 government representatives, 17 from the private sector, and nine representatives from NGOs and academia. The workshop included two discussion sessions. The first discussion focused on reflections on implementation and progress in the areas of environment, economy, and people and development. The second session delved deeper into the three areas that emerged as areas requiring improvements; data monitoring, whole-of-nation actions, and the SDG ecosystem in Brunei Darussalam. Participants were put into groups with diverse stakeholders to discuss their specific themes, with representatives from UNRCO, and the UNESCAP as discussion moderators. The workshop also heard from both UN representatives on the topic of global and regional progress for the 2030 Agenda, and best practices for post-VNR actions, respectively.

Insights From The Workshop

Findings from the workshop were rich, diverse, and practical, and can help provide a guide to either policy planning, interventions, or actions. Key insights from the workshop are as follows:

Environment. Participants recognised that many NGOs are contributing in this area. However, more efforts are required to establish a stronger link between sustainability values and activities or implementation. This will help address issues concerning consumption practices and waste production which remains a challenge for the country. Lack of data and resources are also challenges identified in this area, especially for Goal 13, as well as enforcement issues, which can greatly reduce policy and legislative effectiveness. More focus is required towards capacity building especially in green technologies and solutions, as well as increased investment for R&D, assists in policy recommendations. Practical steps to address these issues include sharing best practices from other Non-Governmental actors, as well as international experts, through partnerships and collaborations.

Economy. There are many opportunities for increased efforts for economic diversification and to explore the possibility of developing a circular economy that is resource-efficient and planet-friendly. Inclusive economic participation is necessary for economic growth, to ensure that all groups including women and girls are empowered to compete for better-paying jobs. More must be done to promote entrepreneurship in the country and support existing MSMEs so that they are able to scale up and access foreign markets. For private sector growth, awareness is required to encourage pro-investment policies for targeted industries. The workshop highlighted that promoting sustainability in the country requires early intervention, such as raising awareness of SDGs through school curriculums. Discussions further identified areas that need further strengthening in the remaining seven years towards the 2030 Agenda, including job creation and opportunities, sustainable modes of financing, more awareness of SDGs including indicators linked to economic performance, and improving capacity for strong governance.

People and Development. Sustainability principles need further embedding into the way of life in Brunei Darussalam in order to secure buy-ins and tackle challenges around mindset. There needs to be a stronger link between SDG principles and existing cultural values in the country, for example, establishing links between the practice of *Zakat* in reducing poverty in the country. This will help address issues to do with unsustainable behaviour and ensure the country is moving forward as one. Policies and planning must be driven by inclusivity values to ensure no one is left behind. Finally, there is a need for a sustainability impact assessment mechanism to understand better on implementation effectiveness. For this, a strong data governance is essential in determining the true extend of sustainability in the country's planning for the economy, environment and social development.

Monitoring and Evaluating SDG Progress. There are opportunities for further improvements in integrating policies and targets of various national and global frameworks. Data sets and targets need to complement national development plans and frameworks including *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, SDG Global Framework and the three national blueprints. Stronger localisation efforts will ensure SDG targets and aspirations are integrated to complement and support national vision of *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. Data gaps in the system can be addressed through improvements in the data culture and digitisation integration. To make further improvements to the database for SDGs in Brunei Darussalam needs closer coordination amongst relevant agencies, strengthened data governance, and increased investments to ensure other data collection methods are given similar priority such as surveys. Capacity building remains a mainstay in improving data mechanisms in the country, especially with complex data collection for cross-cutting issues.

Whole-of-Nation Approach. The workshop highlighted that a more robust whole-of-nation approach is necessary to ensure sustainable development. Consistent communication and transparency can gear collective action and address certain data gaps, especially in ensuring the comprehensiveness of data and improve data capture related to the rural communities and vulnerable groups. A closer working relationship

between the Government and the NGOs, volunteer groups, and private sector can lead to increased coordinated efforts and collective actions towards the achievement of the SDGs. In this regard, contributions from these sectors and individuals need to be formally recognised or acknowledged to promote empowerment, momentum-building, and increased involvement. Stakeholder engagement strategies must be designed to promote inclusivity and citizen participation from all groups in the country. Lastly, a stronger link between sustainability principles and day-to-day life practices to avoid messaging inconsistencies and misalignment of efforts.

SDG Ecosystem. Participants acknowledged that Brunei Darussalam has an ecosystem that potentially allows for accelerated SDGs achievements. However, certain areas needed strengthening including embedding values of sustainable development within Brunei Darussalam's culture, identity, and practices. This can lead to better and more impactful implementation and increase public ownership of the SDGs. The people of Brunei Darussalam, especially the youths can be further empowered and mobilised by promoting partnerships and providing sustained platforms for SDG-related dialogues and activities. The Government sector plays a role in strengthening the governance structure in the country and providing a platform that integrates more stakeholders, such as the NGOs, into the policymaking process or policy recommendations.

Strengthening the SDGs

The Pre-2023 HLPF workshop provided a space where lessons and learnings from the second VNR can be shared and synthesised to be used as guidance moving forward for Brunei Darussalam. In this way, the VNR became more than just a review process, but expanded to become an important tool that allows for exchanging lessons and experiences, identifying process and implementation challenges, and accelerating actions towards SDG achievements. With this, Brunei Darussalam can capture lessons from this review cycle to aid in the country's next phase of SDG implementation.

From the institutional perspective, challenges in data availability and collection remain a barrier to SDG achievements not just in Brunei Darussalam, but for other countries too. The availability of data and national capacities for data collection is important to ensure a holistic and nuance assessment of SDG progress in the country. To ensure this, more effort is required to build capacity for better data governance and collection, including disaggregated data to address inequalities and ensure no one is left behind. There is an opportunity here, too, for citizen empowerment and mobilisation to be data collectors through the use of digital technology.

The highly interconnected and cross-cutting nature of sustainable development requires an adaptable SDG ecosystem that can respond to the needs of a highly complex and sophisticated agenda. The SDG ecosystem in Brunei Darussalam must be ready to support policies, data collection methods, and other approaches to this end. Furthermore, there are opportunities for increased and dedicated investments and incentives for projects that support sustainable development, particularly, system changes or technology that are transformative for society.

On the individual front, embedding behaviours and cultural practices that are underpinned by sustainability values into its people could lead to a greater and transformative change. This presents an opportunity for greater alignment of SDGs with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, integrating not just the SDG Global Framework into national policies and plans but also integration into the country's value system.

The country must also continue to leverage partnerships, both at home and overseas, across wide-ranging activities from improving stakeholder engagements, enhancing capacity, sharing best practices and solutions, coordinating actions, and raising awareness. A stronger whole-of-nation movement will lead to more collective and coordinated actions, and the benefits of sustainable development are inclusive and universal to be enjoyed by all.

In conclusion, a summary of the key resolutions of the Workshop is as follows:

- The VNR is not an end in itself but a means to **exchange lessons and experiences, identify challenges and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs**.
- There is a need to **improve the availability of data and national capacities for data collection**. There must be more efforts to address data gaps by collecting data, especially disaggregated data, to ensure an accurate assessment of the situation, particularly those of the most disadvantaged groups, and to address inequalities and leave no one behind.
- More efforts need to be made to **encourage sustainable behaviours** and to do things that will bring a bigger change. Since human behaviour is at the heart of the SDGs, there is a need to see how behavioural insights can be incorporated to better understand human behaviour, what drives it, and to consider what can change it.
- There is a need to consider **financing and incentivising SDG initiatives and projects** to support the change. Support is also required to encourage transformative game changers – in particular, those who are one of its first. This must be supported by a research and development ecosystem.
- Work must continue to **build up a supporting SDG ecosystem**, including policies. A system approach must be adopted and to look at things that may be mutually supporting or interlinked with each other. SDG linkages, purposeful monitoring and evaluation, technology and big data can potentially accelerate a healthy ecosystem.
- There was a call for a more **inclusive membership** into the National Coordination Committee on SDGs by including the private sector and corporate bodies.
- **More efforts to localise SDGs must be made.** This includes improving institutional arrangements and aligning with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, ministries, and agencies' priorities.
- It is important for all parties to **instill stewardship** of Brunei Darussalam and its future; honouring our heritage and values for today and the future generation.
- **Presence, participation, and partnership** both in Brunei Darussalam and internationally are essential in building awareness and contributing to action; within and across generations and social groups (including vulnerable groups) - mutually benefiting and supporting one another. There is a need to continue the dialogue, conversing, sharing experiences, and exchanging views.
- There is also a recognition that **youths will be and will remain an important part of SDG**.
- We need to continue to develop a **holistic approach to SDGs in Brunei Darussalam**, to create the space to address structural issues, support innovative policies that work for all and can adapt to a fast-changing world, and ensure space and meaningful participation as a vital foundation for sound public policies and decision-making.
- **Collaboration, consultation, and partnerships** will continue to strengthen the SDG Agenda.
- Strong SDGs implementation will facilitate in achieving **common desire and collective will** to live in a region of lasting peace, security, and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity, and social progress in Brunei Darussalam.

LOOKING FORWARD

Brunei Darussalam recognises that Sustainable Development is a journey that will require concerted and continuous efforts. This second VNR has allowed for the opportunity to share experiences, successes, challenges, and lessons learnt with the global community. More importantly, it allowed Brunei Darussalam to review progress with a lens to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Several key lessons post-VNR will be used to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Brunei Darussalam.

The process of undergoing a VNR revealed the importance of enhancing coordination, alignment, and harmonisation. Efforts by the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs must continue to ensure that the Committee remains a critical mechanism of national coordination and leadership to produce results. There is also a need to continue to harmonise SDGs with *Wawasan Brunei 2035* to ensure connection and alignment with national development goals. It is through this that policies and institutions can be strengthened. The work to align the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* still continues.

The VNR process was inherently valuable for taking stock of progress. Monitoring progress, however, requires up-to-date, reliable, and credible data. A more rigorous and systematic approach is needed to monitor data and action to better diagnose the situation, design actions, monitor progress, make necessary adjustments, and scale up the approaches that work. From these, more meaningful conversations about the SDGs across all relevant parties can occur. The VNR process has also revealed the need to strengthen stakeholder engagement and mobilise multi-stakeholder support and partnerships to implement SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda has ambitious targets, covering multiple and interconnected sectors, and it requires the contribution of all segments of society. It is critical to involve all segments of society, including NGOs, businesses, grass-root leaders, and the youth. Cooperation and collaboration are now more critical than ever, and the international community needs to continue to work together to accelerate this global agenda.





The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented challenges to lives and societies and threatened to set back the global community in achieving the SDGs. Amidst the challenges, Brunei Darussalam continued its journey to support the SDG agenda, coupled with the government's swift and pre-emptive actions, and was able to continue the pursuit of sustainability.

The progress of shared efforts in many areas within the SDGs is encouraging despite the unfortunate disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of data reports. Ministries, agencies, and social partners have all worked together to ensure that Brunei Darussalam can reach the targets set out in the global development framework. Brunei Darussalam will step up the whole-of-nation efforts to provide a greater impetus to Brunei Darussalam's transformative agenda for global sustainability.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AITI	Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry	NAP	National Adaptation Plan
BCCS	Brunei Climate Change Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office	NCD	Noncommunicable Diseases
BDCB	Brunei Darussalam Central Bank	NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
BDFA	Brunei Darussalam Food Authority	NDMC	National Disaster Management Centre
BDQF	Brunei Darussalam Qualification Framework	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
BIBD	Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam	NSO	National Statistics Office
BNCCP	Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy	PMO	Prime Minister's Office
BSP	Brunei Shell Petroleum	PPP	Public-Private Partnership
CSPS	Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies	PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
DARe	Darussalam Entreprise	R&D	Research and Development
DOS	Department of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy	RKN	<i>Rancangan Kemajuan Negara</i> or National Development Plan
EVs	Electric Vehicles	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	SKN	<i>Sistem Kebajikan Negara</i> or National Welfare System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
GHG	Greenhouse Gases	SNCC	Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
HPC	Health Promotion Centre	TAP	Employees Trust Fund
IBTE	Institute of Brunei Technical Education	TWG	SDG Technical Working Group
IoT	Internet of Things	UBD	Universiti Brunei Darussalam
JAPEM	Community Development Department, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
JASTRe	Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation, Ministry of Development	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MIB	<i>Melayu Islam Beraja</i> or Malay Islamic Monarchy	UNISSA	Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali
MISC	Manpower Industry Steering Committee	UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office for Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam
MOD	Ministry of Development	USMS	Unified Smart Metering System
MOE	Ministry of Education	UTB	Universiti Teknologi Brunei
MOFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy	VNR	Voluntary National Review
MOH	Ministry of Health	WHO	World Health Organisation
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs		
MORA	Ministry of Religious Affairs		
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding		
MPEC	Manpower Planning and Employment Council		
MPRT	Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism		
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises		
MTIC	Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications		
MUIB	Brunei Darussalam Islamic Religious Council		

The cover page for the Brunei Darussalam VNR Report was a special art piece commissioned to a local artist, Susannah Anak Rogo Sitai Liew



Susannah Anak Rogo @ Susannah Sitai Liew was born and raised in Brunei Darussalam located on the north coast of the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia. Goes by her artist name "Suzi". She comes from a mixed lineage of Lun Bawang, Iban and Hakka Chinese. Embracing her mixed cultural lineage as her primary source of inspiration in many of her artworks. She completed her Bachelor of Creative Arts & Technology at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (2011-2015) with a Capstone Project titled, "Beauty of Diversity". Additionally, she recently completed her Masters in Arts in Cultural Policy and Arts Management (2019-2020) at University College of Dublin, Ireland with her thesis topic on "An Exploratory Investigation On Preserving Borneo Indigenous Art and Culture". By observing and researching the importance of policies and how it can play a major role in preserving and protecting Borneo indigenous arts and cultural rights. Especially in the ever-changing world of globalisation. Her art style is influenced by the works of Symbolism, Surrealism and Art Nouveau. Incorporating the art style with her deep interest in her cultural roots and passion for preserving the cultural identities of Borneo indigenous arts, celebrating the island's rich biodiversity. At the same time highlighting issues such as deforestation, animal extinction, the impending loss of cultural identities and knowledge as well as the plight of indigenous communities in Borneo.



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