

# Green Business Initiative in Brunei Darussalam

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# ***Green Business Initiatives***

## ***Green Business in Brunei Darussalam***

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### **Abstract**

**A**ccording to Vision 2035 of Brunei, This country will achieve well-educated, highly skilled society, the quality of life as well as sustainable economy in 2035. In order to achieve those visions in 2035, Brunei will excel some following areas such as to provide their people with high living standards and stability in politic as well as implement sustainable development such as balance among economy, environment, employment, and education.

In line with sustainable economy and proper care of environment, recently, business is become one of a major issues that has been taken seriously by Brunei Government since it has some implication with regards to safety, property values, quality of life, environment, social, and economic for it sustainable country in the future. Improper business is mainly still depends on gas and oil with no proper enviromental regulation system. Brunei is no doubt well placed economically in the new millenium with sufficient income from the sales of oil and natural gas and from investments to enable the country sustains itself until the year 2020.

However, there are some growing worries about sustainability of such reserves and income after 2020. Therefore, the worry about the future especially for a growing youthful population influenced Brunei's economic policy. A green business is one of alternatives to achieve the balance among economic diversification, privatization and sustainable country. This paper begins with the general overview of green business by surveying the definition. The second part presents state of business in Brunei Darussalam. The findings showed an indication that the number of business in Brunei Darussalam has increased in number every year. Finally, we examine how Brunei Darussalam initiatives in green business and explore some ways can be done to improve it.

**Key words:** *Green, business, initiatives.*

# 1. Introduction

Brunei is one of the highest per capita income in Asia and one of the highest rates of macroeconomic stability in the world. The World Economic Forum's "Global Competitiveness Report 2009-10" ranked Brunei first out of 134 countries in terms of its macroeconomic stability. Potentially, this gives Brunei considerable appeal in the eyes of foreign investors who seek above many things to minimize investment risk.

Despite its wealth, Brunei's economic fortunes rely almost entirely on the country's oil and gas industry to finance its development programs, which contributes 62% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Brunei's oil and gas sector props up the public sector, which employs 70% of Brunei's workforce. Brunei policy-makers acknowledge that this situation limits incentive and opportunity for entrepreneurship and business development in new industries. They also recognize that the government sector will not be able to continue to offer university graduates employment at previous levels.

Moreover, Brunei Darussalam receives income from rent, royalties, corporate tax and dividend. As we know that Brunei Darussalam is the third largest oil producer in south east asia and also the fourth largest oil producer of liquefied natural gas in the world. Gross domestic product at current prices in 2010 was increased by 8.0 per cent at B\$16.9 billion from BND 15.6 billion 2009. GDP per capita at current prices also increased by 5.9 per cent to BND 40.7 thousand from BND 38,4 thousand in 2009. the inflation rate was decreased from 1.9 in 2009 to 1.2 in 2010 and unemployment rate from 3.7 in 2008, to 3.5 in 2009 and 2.7 percent in 2010. The second most important industry is the construction industry. this is directly the result on increased investment by the government in development and infrastructure projects.

Brunei Darussalam is also moving toward ensuring a sustainable natural environment. Commitments were made by 189 world leaders including Brunei Darussalam at the Millennium Summit in New York in 2000 to reduce poverty and promote inclusive and sustainable development by 2015, laying the foundation for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a roadmap and timetable for realizing this global aspiration.

Climate change is recognized by government a serious global that demands an urgent and collective global response. In response to such a threat, over the next 20 years there will be a shift toward a low-carbon, resource efficient economy and whilst this will inevitably be costly.

there will also be considerable business opportunities and economic benefits to be gained.

Brunei Darussalam government has taken a lead in responding to the challenge of climate change. It is crucial, that this is done in the most cost-effective way in the process of economic growth, competitiveness, and job creation. There is a need therefore to identify the source of advantage for Brunei Darussalam and the potential business opportunities in a low-carbon or green business (intended as low-carbon, resource efficient business). Therefore, it is critically important for Brunei Darussalam sustainable development and is highly relevant to Government's commitment of ensuring business success and sustainable natural development, one of the alternatives is through green business.

Green business is relatively recent and not well defined term which can be interpreted in different way by different people and organization. What is considered green by one organization may not be by others. Furthermore, the definition of green business is becoming undermined by proliferation of green labeling and standards which is leading some consumers to consumer 'green labels' to simply be a marketing tool with little substance behind it.

Nevertheless, the basic premise of a green business as one which is focused on sustainability, in environmental and resource term, is well understood by business and consumers alike. While there is a difference in how rigorously that applied, in practice, the value of labeling a business as green is clear and cannot be ignored, as numerous survey of consumers and business's decision to adopt green practices is not purely altruistic or selfish, rather it is based on good business sense – in fact, enhanced profits or revenues are expected to accrue from adopting green business practices.

## 2. Definition of green business

The word "green" is not the only a term for anything environmental although there is the tendency to substitute the word "green" for environmental." Environmentalism is to grand topic that has several subdivisions. Under this grand topic that has several subdivisions. Under this grand topic on environmentalism, we will find green, sustainable, pollution, and conservation. Each one of these

divisions is immense subject on their own. The best definition of green refers to the health impact of what we do on living things. So green is primarily a health-related issue. This is seen in the fact that cleaning products were the early green issues. In fact, indoor air quality is a big factor in green buildings. Sicks building syndrome was the result of poor indoor air quality, which is the antithesis of Green.

A “green business” can be defined as an organization that uses renewable resources (environmentally sustainable) as well as holds itself accountable for the human resource aspect of their activities (socially responsible).” Being green requires developing an attitude toward sustainability and practice that can be merged into our everyday lives. Being a green business means changing the way a business purchases, develops, produces, and provides products and services. Green business probably has a positive impact on the surrounding. If we think of our planet as a warehouse of goods, when we use the stocks, we have to pay for them with money or fair trade. When we use the natural resources, we have to pay the environment back to offset our consumption.

There is a misconception that “becoming a green business” means being a radical “environmentalist” from the “green movement: of the past. This is not the case. Think of the old “green business” as as “bright green”. There are many shades of green in between. We will have to decide what shade of green are we.

Recently, many companies have chosen to make reusable shopping bags available to their customers. Each has chosen a different approach. Company ‘A’ chose to provide large bags made of a thick blue plastic material with cloth handles imprinted with their logo. Company ‘B’ chose to go with black cloth bags with their logo imprinted on the side, and company ‘C’ chose the most environmentally friendly product, but is it really the “greenest” if it is too small to hold enough products? Will people continue to use it or just throw it away?.

There are a number of new “green” terms we will need to familiarize our-self with for example sustainable/sustainability, carbon foot print , “carbon offsets” or “carbon credits,” and VOC.

Sustainability refers to three areas, environmental, economic, and social. It is about making choices that

meet our needs without compromising the needs of future generations. “environmental sustainability” refers to maintaining the quality and longevity of environmental resources used by the business. This can include energy, water, waste management, emissions, etc. If a business puts back 100% of the natural resources it consumes, it is considered an “environmentally sustainable” business. This is because it replenishes the very resources it depends on. If a business consumes more resources than nature can replenish, uses too much energy, or cause excess waste/pollution, it is not considered sustainable. “Economic Sustainability” includes the overall financial model and productivity of a company. The income and expenses must provide for balance of company. If a business is much more debt, it is not economically sustainable. In this context it refers to judge the products and services we purchase to determine if they are “sustainable” or “not sustainable”. For example, purchasing energy-saving Compact florescent Lights (CFLs) is considered a “more sustainable” choice.

Social responsibility refers to social impact of a business. It includes ethical principles, giving back to society, health and safety, respect for human rights, equal opportunities, fair compensation, and ensuring a high quality of life. It involves eliminating unethical and corrupt behaviour. It involves thoroughly investigating their sources to ensure they provide fair compensation for work performed, provide a safe work environment, and do not violate human rights in the treatment of their workers. It may also include doing things for the local community, educating/helping others, participating in community groups or our local city and chamber of commerce.

Carbon footprint refers to our impact on the environment. It refers to measuring how much carbon dioxide does a particular activity, purchase, or product produces. For example, driving a car to the store produces more larger carbon footprint than does walking to the store, as it produces much more carbon dioxide.

Carbon offsets or carbon credits refers to offsetting our carbon footprint instead of reducing our own carbon footprint. This used to mean planting a lot of trees to offset our carbon output. Today, this means purchasing carbon credits from a company that offsets carbon emissions. This is commonly used to compensate for air

travel or use of an automobile. For example, if we take a plane to travel somewhere, we can buy carbon offsets to compensate the environment for our production of carbon dioxide. Be careful and thoroughly research a company before buying carbon credits.

VOC refers to Volatile Organic Compounds. These include paints/thinners; dry cleaning chemicals, petroleum products, and tobacco. Sources can also include copy machines, carpets and products containing formaldehyde, such as particle-board-based furniture and cabinets.

In Brunei Darussalam, one of the key challenges of urban development and growing population is focusing on the green business as one of alternative to achieve the balance among economic diversification, privatization and sustainable development.

### 3. Methodology

This is an exploratory research that tries to examine the so-called Green Business Initiatives in Brunei Darussalam. Both primary and secondary data were collected and utilized. The process involved in conducting the in-depth interviews with officers of Department of Environment, Park and Recreation (DEPR) and Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB) as well as Municipal Officials. The research utilizes qualitative methods in order to get a deeper understanding of the problem as well as to see the phenomenon as part of greater whole.

During the stage of data collection activities relevant to the study, several approaches were conducted in the data gathering process, the principal method of which was the informal and semi-structured in-depth interviews.

A major component of this study comprises of the data gathered from secondary data sources. These are in form of books, journal, and conference papers and newspapers articles.

The primary and secondary data were examined, sorted, categorized, evaluated, compared and completed the reviewing the raw and recorded data.

Brunei Darussalam has entered a new phase of development in its drive toward economic diversification from dependence on oil and liquefied

natural gas-based economy. The contribution from the non-oil and gas-based sector of the economy, as reflected in the contribution to GDP has continued to increase. Moreover, the total number of registered establishments in the private sector has increased from 4085 in 1994 to 7,631 in 2004 to 8,790 in 2006

and 9,302 in 2008 (Table.1). This encouraging trend was initiated by the government moves to diversify the economy and to promote the development of the private sector as a means to attain its goals. This

strategy was solidly back-up by the implementation of Investment Incentive act 1975 and the formation of the ministry of industry and primary resources 1989.

In its effort to stimulate economic growth, the Brunei government is actively promoting the development of various target sectors through its five-year National Development Plans. These outline the distribution of government funding and the budget allocated for development in various sectors of the country.

The previous 9th National Development Plan (2007-2012) (Table.2) marked a strategic shift in the planning and implementation of development projects, as it is the first national development projects, as it is the first national development plan to have been formulated in line with the objectives of Brunei plan, better known as "Wawasan Brunei 2035" or "Vision Brunei 2035" in 2008

## 4. The Present State of Business in Brunei

**Table 1.** Distribution of Private Sector Enterprises in Brunei Darussalam 2004-2008

<b>sector</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Wholesale and retail Trade	1,551	1,270	1,575	1,779	1,947
Construction	1,476	1,342	1,624	1,719	1,630
community, Social & personal services	976	1,088	1,240	1,279	1,324
Mining & Manufacturing	1,289	1,472	1,656	1,650	1,570
Coffe shops, Restaurant & Hotels	752	827	748	942	913
Transport, storage & communication	315	335	369	388	393
Financial, Insurance, & Business services	384	412	467	469	484
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	834	914	1,047	975	981
Production of oil and liquefied Natural Gas	20	21	26	30	27
Sawmill and timber processing	34	35	38	35	33
Total	7,631	7,716	8,790	9,266	9,302

Source: Brunei Darussalam Statistical Yearbook 2008



<b>Total Allocation (B\$)</b>	<b>9,5 bil</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>ALLOCATION BY SECTOR</b>	<b>B\$</b>	<b>%</b>
Industry and Commerce	1.024.965.460	10,8
Agriculture	101.771.500	1,1
Forestry	65.368.000	0,7
Fishery	115.839.960	1,2
Industrial Development	404.334.000	4,3
Commerce & Entrepreneurial Development	38.514.000	0,4
Puala Muara Besar	299.138.000	3,1
Transport and Communication	1.067.038.300	11,2
Roads	568.535.000	6
Civil Aviation	114.527.000	1,2
Marine and Ports	26.753.000	0,3
Telecommunications	116.517.000	1,2
Radio and Televisions	118.241.300	2,4
Postal Services	12.465.000	0,1
Social Services 'A'	1.294.267.900	13,6
Education	822.468.500	8,7
Medical and Health	149.152.000	1,6
Religious Affairs	27.180.600	0,3
Human Resource Development	295.466.800	3,1
Social Services 'B'	1.761.451.800	18,5
Government Housing	23.281.000	0,2
Public Facilities and Environment	182.500.800	1,9
National Housing	1.555.670.000	16,4
Public Utilities	1.492.717.900	15,7
Electricity	587.904.000	6,2
Sanitation	178.013.000	1,9
Water Supply	524.573.900	5,5
Drainage	202.227.000	2,1
Public Buildings	672.958.800	7,1
Science, Technology and R & D	165.178.400	1,7
ICT	1.145.687.000	12,1
Security	596.789.000	6,3
Royal Brunei Armed Forces	421.286.000	4,4
Police	175.503.000	1,8
Miscellaneous	278.944.640	2,9
Contingency Reserves	244.944.640	2,6
Site Development	15.000.000	0,2
Consultant Fee	15.000.000	0,2
Liabilities for Completed Project	4.000.000	0

According to a survey conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in June, 2007, SMEs accounted for 48,5 percent of all business and provide 92 per cent of total employment in the private sector or 27,6 per cent of the total workforce in Brunei. Pg. Hajah Mariana PDM DR Pg. Hj Abd Mokmin, Deputy Department Secretary at the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources said that "The Enterprise Scheme (EFS), loans with a ceiling of \$5 million, has provided loans totaling \$42 million to 122 SMEs from 1999 to 2009 while the Microcredit Financing Scheme, loans with ceiling of \$50,000, has provided \$10 million worth of capital to 485 SMEs from 2001 to 2009." There about 4022 business establishment in private sectors, 90% are from SMEs (68%-service sectors 22% -construction and 20%-manufacturing) in Brunei Darussalam in 1990s. Until recently, There are estimated more than 9000 establishment in 2011. SMEs in Brunei comprise over 95 per cent of the overall business base.

On July 7 2010, BEDB, with the consent of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di- Petuan of Brunei Darussalam, announced it was setting up a \$2-million grant scheme to support the development of new technology and products by local SMEs. by local SMEs.

## 5. Green Business Initiatives in Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam tries to manage its business establishment as good as possible according to so called world sustainable business. In line with Brunei vision 2035, His Majesty's government has put a focus on development with environmental conservation as well as exploring and utilizing natural resources to obtain optimum benefits for the current and future generations. Going 'green' is one of the most used advertising gimmicks for large multi-national companies to improve the market perception of their businesses as well as smaller, more localized businesses are also venturing into eco-friendly territory in the hopes it will pay off just as big and Brunei Darussalam will follow suit.

According to Howard Shaw, executive director of the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) the 'green' industry is proving to be a lucrative cash cow for businesses around the world, which 'going green makes sense and 10 ts.' He added that countries like Singapore beginning to see the value of being green as a competitive toll to differentiate them from the crowd.<sup>2</sup> He stressed that this situation is nowhere more apparent than in small and usually part of a medium enterprises (SMES) that are entire business value chain where

suppliers like themselves are a plenty."Finally, he believed that this in turn, will put these businesses in the preferred supplier list of bigger corporations who have themselves adopted (or are looking to adopt) eco-friendly and sustainable practices and expect their suppliers to do the same.

A green business in Brunei Darussalam is something recently. This opportunity motivate local businesses with a "big chance" for Darussalam introduced this concept back in the conference in 2009 when this country invited some experts from Sustainability Victoria, Australia to explain and discuss concerning a green business.

exploring ventures. Brunei new Brunei Darussalam is using a two-pronged approach to push for green business initiatives agenda. "First is getting existing businesses to reduce their carbon footprint by adopting greener practices; the second is creating businesses that supplies green products or services.

In the Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) in January 2010, the participants were being "impressed" by the proximity of natural flora and fauna to its built environment. The green tourism or eco-tourism has been growing in strength. The development of physical, educational and legal infrastructure was needed to cater to new green tourism projects and initiatives. Sheikh Jamaluddin Sheikh Mohamed, Brunei Tourism Board (BTB) director stated that the country's commercial sector should start concentrating on green business such as transportation, building maintenance cleanliness as part of our national duty. Public toilets are one of the biggest concerns. Some department stores public restrooms and the floors are wet, there is no toilet paper and it is dirty, and the department stores themselves selling these items. Brunei Darussalam has managed to find ways to maintain the public cleanliness of restrooms as well as providing rubbish bins at strategic places.

Brunei Darussalam Government has symbolized its commitment in offsetting global tree loss by mass planting of 60,000 tree seedlings beginning May 22, 2010. The mass Day of the global planting Biological symbolic ceremony involving the specific target group of communities on the theme formulated for each year. The planting coincides with the International Biodiversity and Green Wave ceremony initiated by the Convention on Diversity. This was a public and a depending young generations such as students are the main target group to be involved. The mass protect and enhance forests to provide suitable habitats for wildlife, symbolized Brunei's commitment in ensuring the earth is a safe place for all

sorts of living things and increase the nation's forest capacity to absorb and store atmospheric carbon.

There are other some green business initiatives has been carried out in Brunei Darussalam, for example, eco-friendly projects have dominated much of the business scene, particularly since two years ago with DSTCom (DST Communications Sdn. Bhd) being the latest to go green by introducing electronic 'top-ups' of mobile phone credit to replace the traditional scratch cards. As of September 2011, the "alternative solution for selling and distributing recharge credits to Easi subscribers" would allow distributors and vendors to manage their own profile and account given by DST, including features like transaction history, transfer of 'airtime' from distributors to retailers and vice versa to subscribers.

Brunei Darussalam is currently inviting private sectors such as Alcoa, Butra Heidelberg Cement, Total and HSBC exhibit green business initiatives including products and services from other organizations. It was also a showcase the outstanding and shortlisted entries of the 2011 Youth Go Green Initiative Awards and projects by the next generation."

The "Youth Go Green Initiative Awards" in conference to recognize the contribution of the young citizens of Brunei. Initiative of green solution such as environmental, climate change, global warming awareness was promoted.

The award was themed "Saving the World, Saving Our Future" and was organized in collaboration with the Science Technology and Environment Partnership (STEP) Centre, Ministry of Education. Previous award is Princess Rashidah Young Nature Scientist Award (PRYNESA). It has also contributed to the government's strong focus on environmentally sustainable development and public and embracing of better environmental practices such as construction sector, green awareness practices in work place, energy conservation, eco-tourism tree-planting activities and no plastic bag weekends."

Brunei is playing its part towards creating construction by coming up with an initiative that is hoped to reduce carbon footprints in buildings nationwide. The Institute of Surveyors, Engineers and Architects (Puja) is taking the sustainability in their projects by establishing a committee to form the guidelines and standards for local architects to follow when designing or constructing new projects. This responded to the global sustainability development challenges for quite some time. The initiative is focusing towards promoting energy efficient designs in buildings in the Sultanate to further reduce carbon footprint and to establish a proper design guideline and a rating system to evaluate a building for its environmental impact and



performance, something that is similarly practiced such as BCA Green Mark in Singapore and the Green Building Index in Malaysia. The initiatives also encourage adoption of various green building technologies and innovation to achieve better performance, such as in areas overseas of energy and water efficiency, and would certainly open up new business opportunities in terms of providing these value-added facilities to all green concept buildings.

The Ministry of Development's recent efforts, through the Public Works Department, in issuing circulars to all local architects, designers and consultants to encourage all stakeholders to adopt guidelines on the planning and designing of green building concepts for new and upcoming projects. concept fully, it will require strong participation from all stakeholders and end users. The architectural features In order to adopt the green building which could contribute to energy efficiency in their designs are proper building orientation, optimum roof insulation, deep recessed window designs as well as incorporating various mechanical and electrical features that enhance the performance of the building. Some governments in other countries have practiced giving out incentives to development and utilization of green encourage more building concepts, such as tax returns. This practice will also be taken by the Brunei's government to promote the widely use of the concept in the Sultanate. It will encourage local businesses and entrepreneurs will realize the benefit of green businesses.

The companies and industries sustainability problem will obviously differ. It is realize some oil & gas companies may focus on health and safety. They priority in their sustainability strategy is to avoid from incidents. They also keep reputation.

Based on Hongkong Shanghai Bank Corporation research result that global Climate Change related business or green business could be worth US\$2 trillion (\$2.45 trillion) by 2020.<sup>14</sup> Businesses society and entrepreneurs will realize that business" opportunities associated with low-carbon economy, climate change and green technology will be very valuable. This resulted that businesses will consider their sustainability risk.

One of foreign private banks has been one of the pioneer organizations in Brunei to adopt greener practices in the workplace. As part of it efforts to manage the environmental impact of their business operation, the bank has been actively reviewing its energy and paper consumption. implemented have made a positive impact on the environment and financial bottom line." For example, the Results from the review and the initiatives energy consumption has reduced by twenty-two per cent since the bank adopted for a new water chilled air condition system as well as an identified area where it can save up to 320 tons of paper. It is realized that more

than \$200,000 of saving annually. The consumption of gasoline has also reduced almost fifty per cent since they changed their old transportation to the more energy saving transportation.

<sup>20</sup> The Ministry of Development through the Department of Environment, Park and recreation and 18 Department Stores of Negara Brunei Darussalam pledge to collaborate in the implementation of the " No Plastic Bag Weekend ( every Saturday and Sunday )" starting on Saturday 26 March, 2011, currently the no plastic bag weekend foe every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The reduce 15% recycling rate by 2015 and 20% by 2020.

Going green could be the next mrga-trend for business in Brunei as there are bound to be opportunities, especially when consumers become more aware of what they are purchase. Brunei could benefit from a Green Building Council as there are a lot of houses to be built in the country and this could help brunei in its efforts to increase sustainability. Internasional big corporations have gren building ( and ) usually have their buildings certified as this creates higher value. Investors want certification and even though that means a bigger cost of maybe five per cent initially, it will translate to revenue of 15 per cent in the end. Green product create more awareness and in turn.

The awareness and education of green business will implement into action. Furthermore, It will also searching for green local business opportunities. Develop countries globally change toward green economy and reduce climate change impact green technology market is an area with high growth potential. Businesses in Brunei will be able to capture these chances. Even though the green business is still new Brunei and this sector affords local business with a "Big Opportunity" for exploring new ventures. Brunei Darussalam should engage its stakeholders, which means that educate the public, educate the students, the teachers, government officers and private sector such businessmen on the importance of green business, and how it relates back to biodiversity and climate change.

## 6. Conclusion

Green Business is still in inflant stage in brunei darussalam. Brunei Darussalam should learn from developed countries about green business. Since Brunei Darussalam is in infant state of green business, There are some aspect to be explored such as public awareness, technology, green business management systems and legislation. Those are the problems that

facing by the Brunei business entities, in the case of local small to medium Enterprises (SMEs), "going green" may not be so easy to sustain. The high level of capital and expertise of eco-business usually need to start up, which SMEs do not normally have.

Because of these conditions, the Brunei government really concerns toward the green business. The Ministry of Development's recent efforts, through the Public Works Department, in issuing circulars to all local architects, designers and consultants to encourage all stakeholders to adopt guidelines on the planning and designing of green building concepts for new and upcoming projects. The government has already settled up a budget for green business and creates integrated green business but not achieving the target yet for example eco-tourism.

The Brunei government should have a good coordination of policies among governmental agencies and private sectors. It should also increase public awareness, improve green business management system and educate the community.

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