



Home > Country Analysis Briefs > [Malaysia Country Analysis Brief](#)

PDF version

*January 2005*

[Background](#) | [Oil](#) | [Natural Gas](#) | [Electricity](#) | [Profile](#) | [Links](#)

## Malaysia

*Malaysia is important to world energy markets because of its 75 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves and its net oil exports of over 300,000 barrels per day.*

*Note: All information contained in this report is the best available as of January 2005 and is subject to change.*



### GENERAL BACKGROUND

Malaysia's economy continued its strong growth in 2004, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expanding by 7.1%, up from 5.3% in 2003. The surge in growth was largely due to a rapid expansion of the country's exports, which grew by more than \$20 billion year-on-year. Real GDP growth for 2005 is forecast to slip back to a more sustainable 5.2%.

Malaysia's banking system has been stabilized, after being undermined by a high proportion of nonperforming loans during the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98. The country's banking sector went through a major restructuring in 2000, with many weaker financial institutions being taken over by stronger ones. In order to stimulate the economy, the country's government increased spending sharply in 2001, but in 2003-2004 began to reduce its government budget deficit as a proportion of GDP as demand for exports recovered.

Malaysia has maintained its policy of a fixed exchange rate between the ringgit and the U.S. dollar, which was imposed by Prime Minister Mahathir in September 1998, as part of capital controls designed to stem the outflow of short-term capital in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. Malaysia's currency is considered somewhat undervalued at the present exchange rate of 3.8 ringgits to one U.S. dollar. Some of the capital controls imposed in 1998 were relaxed in early 2001, such as the taxes on repatriation of short-term stock market profits by foreign portfolio investors.

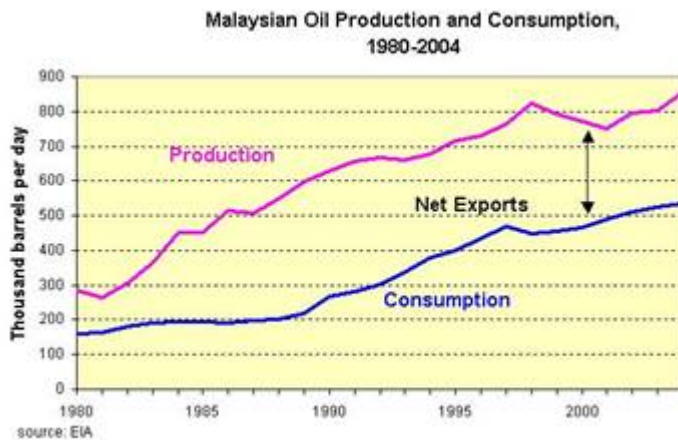
Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad stepped down in October 2003 after over two decades in office. Abdullah Ahmed Badawi, who had previously served as Deputy Prime Minister, succeeded him.

### OIL

Malaysia contains proven oil reserves of 3.0 billion barrels, down from 4.3 billion barrels in 1996. Despite this trend toward declining oil reserves, Malaysia's crude oil production has risen in the last

two years as a result of new offshore development. In 2002, crude oil production averaged 699,000 bbl/d. That figure rose to an average of 750,000 bbl/d for 2004. Total liquids production for 2004 was 855,000 bbl/d, which includes 80,000 bbl/d of natural gas liquids. Malaysia's oil demand has been growing at a much slower rate than its economic output, due to conservation efforts and the conversion of oil-fired power plants to natural gas.

As a result of the long-term trend toward declining oil reserves, Petronas, the state oil and gas company, has embarked on an international exploration and production strategy. Currently, Petronas is invested in oil exploration and production projects in Syria, Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Burma, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, and Angola. Overseas operations now make up nearly one-third of Petronas revenue. Malaysia exports the majority of its oil to markets in Japan, Thailand, South Korea, and Singapore.



Malaysia's domestic oil production occurs offshore and primarily near Peninsular Malaysia. Most of the country's oil fields contain low sulfur, high quality crude, with gravities in the 35 o-50 o API range. More than half of the country's oil production comes from the Tapis field, which contains 44 o API oil with low sulfur content. Esso Production Malaysia Inc. (EPMI), an affiliate of ExxonMobil Corporation, is the largest crude oil producer in Peninsular Malaysia, accounting for nearly half of Malaysia's crude oil production. EPMI operates

seven fields near the peninsula, and one-third of its production comes from the Seligi field. The Seligi-F platform, with its 28 wells, is the newest satellite in the Seligi field, located 165 miles off the coast of Terengganu, Peninsular Malaysia. EPMI holds a 78% interest in the project with Petronas Carigali holding the remaining 22%. EPMI began production from the offshore Larut field in Block PM5 in early 2002, which is expected to reach peak production of 140,000 bbl/d, offsetting some of the future decline in Malaysia's production from mature fields.

In other developments, Sabah Shell Petroleum Company, a unit of Royal Dutch/Shell Group, has raised production at the Kinabalu field to 36,000 bbl/d, as well as 28 million cubic feet per day (Mmcf/d) of gas. Production at Kinabalu, located in the SB-1 block 34 miles off the coast of Labuan, Sabah in east Malaysia, began in December 1997. As operator of the SB-1 block, Shell holds an 80% stake in the block, with Petronas holding a 20% stake. Shell reported two new discoveries offshore from Sabah in 2004, Gamusut-1 in March and Malikai-1 in September. Gamusut-1 lies in deep waters which are the subject of a territorial dispute with Brunei. Both finds are still under evaluation, but are expected to yield significant reserves.

In February 1998, Amerada Hess signed two, five-year production sharing contracts (PSCs) with Petronas for blocks PM304 and SK306. The PSCs commit Amerada to \$24.9 million of exploration activities on the two blocks. Under the PSCs, Amerada holds a 70% stake in PM304, offshore Terengganu, and an 80% stake in SK 306, offshore Sarawak, with Petronas holding the remaining interests in both blocks.

In February 2000, Sweden's Lundin Oil announced that it had signed a sales agreement with Petronas and PetroVietnam which will allow it to proceed with development of its long-delayed

Bunga Kekwa project. Production has now reached a peak of 40,000 bbl/d. Lundin Oil is the operator of the field, and Petronas and PetroVietnam hold equity stakes in the project. PetroVietnam, Pertamina of Indonesia, and Petronas concluded an agreement in June 2003 for joint exploration of Block SK305 offshore from Sarawak .

Murphy Oil reported a sizable new find in August 2003 at Kikeh, in Block K offshore from Sabah . Exploratory drilling in the area continues, and Murphy Oil has set a target of 2007 for commercial production. This will be Malaysia 's first deepwater oil production. Murphy Oil was awarded two new exploration areas in January 2003, Blocks L and M, adjacent to Block K. Murphy has reported several new successful wells in these areas in 2004, as well as one in shallow waters near peninsular Malaysia , Kenarong-1. Canadian independent Talisman Oil reported a new find in Block PM305 in shallow waters offshore from peninsular Malaysia in May 2003. Talisman expects the South Angsi field to come onstream in mid-2005, at a production rate of 15,000-20,000 bbl/d.

### **Refining & Downstream**

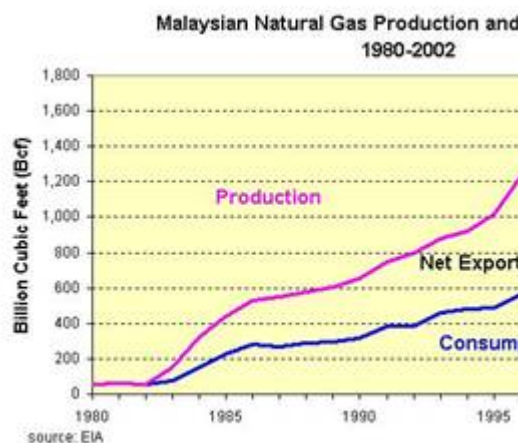
Malaysia has six refineries, with a total processing capacity of 544,832 bbl/d. The three largest are the 155,000-bbl/d Shell Port Dickson refinery and the Petronas Melaka-I and Melaka-II refineries, which have a capacities of 92,832 bbl/d and 126,000 bbl/d, respectively.

The second phase of the \$1.4 billion, 200,000-bbl/d Melaka refinery complex, located about 90 miles south of Kuala Lumpur , commenced operation in August 1998. The 100,000-bbl/d Melaka-II second phase is a joint venture between Petronas (45%), Conoco (40%), and Statoil (15%). This second refinery contains a 62,000-bbl/d vacuum distillation unit, 26,000-bbl/d catalytic cracker, 28,500-bbl/d hydrocracker, 35,000-bbl/d desulfurization unit, and 21,000-bbl/d coker. One of the main purposes of this refinery is to supply gasoline to Conoco's service stations in Thailand and a new line of stations planned for Malaysia . The first phase of the Melaka refinery was finished in mid-1994 and consisted of a 100,000-bbl/d sweet crude distillation unit, which is wholly owned by Petronas and processes Tapis crude oil.

### **NATURAL GAS**

Malaysia contains 75 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven natural gas reserves. Natural gas production has been rising steadily in recent years, reaching 1.7 Tcf in 2002. Natural gas consumption in 2002 was estimated at 1.0 Tcf, with LNG exports of around 0.7 Tcf (mostly to Japan , South Korea , and Taiwan ).

One of the most active areas in Malaysia for gas exploration and development is the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area (JDA), located in the lower part of the Gulf of Thailand and governed by the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Authority (MTJA). The MTJA was established by the two governments for joint exploration of the once-disputed JDA. The JDA covers blocks A-18 and B-17 to C-19. A 50:50 partnership between Petronas and Amerada Hess is developing block A-18, while the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT) and Petronas also share equal interests in the remaining blocks. PTT and Petronas announced an agreement in November 1999 to proceed with development of a gas pipeline from the JDA to a processing plant in Songkla , Thailand , and a pipeline linking the Thai and Malaysian gas grids. Malaysia and Thailand will eventually each take half of the gas produced, though initial production will go just to Malaysia . The project had been controversial in Thailand , facing opposition from local residents in Songkla along the pipeline route. In May 2002, the Thai government announced a final decision to commence construction on the project later in 2002, through the pipeline route was altered slightly to avoid some populated areas. Construction has begun, and the delivery of natural gas into Malaysia is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2005.



Commercial production at Bintang began in February 2003.

Malaysia accounted for approximately 14% of total world LNG exports in 2003. After much delay, a long-planned expansion of its Bintulu LNG complex in Sarawak. In February 2000, Petronas signed a contract headed by Kellogg Brown and Root for construction of the MLNG Tiga facility, with two LNG liquefaction capacity of 7.6 million metric tons (370 Bcf) per year, which was completed in April 2003. The Bintulu is the largest LNG liquefaction center in the world, with a total capacity of 23 million metric tons (1.1 Tcf) production from the new LNG trains will be sold under term contracts to utilities in Japan. Tokyo Electric Power, Tokyo Gas, and Chubu Electric all import LNG from the project. BG signed a contract in August 2000 for a 10-year period to the United Kingdom, to begin in 2007 or 2008. Shell brought two additional fields online in Serai in September, both of which feed into the Bintulu export terminal. The two fields added over 1 million Bcf production.

In addition to LNG, Malaysia exports 150 million cubic feet per day (Mmcf/d) to Singapore via pipeline. Malaysia also is an importer of gas from Indonesia. Petronas signed an agreement in April 2001 with Indonesian Pertamina for the import of gas from Conoco's West Natuna offshore field in Indonesian waters. The agreement is part of a Malaysian strategy to become a hub for Southeast Asian natural gas integration. Deliveries from the pipeline began in mid-2003. The pipeline connects to an existing pipeline from the shore to Malaysia's offshore Duyo field. Construction costs are estimated at \$1.5 billion.

## **ELECTRICITY**

Malaysia currently has approximately 14 gigawatts (GW) of electric generation capacity, of which 8 GW is hydroelectric. In 2002, Malaysia generated around 67 billion kilowatt hours of electricity. The Malaysian government estimates that investment of \$9.7 billion will be required in the electric utility sector through 2010. Much of that investment will be for coal-fired plants, as the Malaysian government has adopted a policy of attempting to reduce the country's dependence on gas for electric power generation, with a goal of increasing coal's share of electricity generation to 30% by 2010.

The largest thermal project under development in Malaysia is the 2,100-MW coal-fired Tanjung Bin. In early 2003, Sumitomo was awarded a \$1.5 billion contract in early 2003 by SKS Power, a Malaysian IPP, for the construction of 1,200-MW generating units at the site, with the first unit scheduled to begin commercial operation in August 2004.

In 1994, the Malaysian government granted approval for the massive 2.4-GW Bakun hydroelectric project. For completion in 2002, the Bakun Dam had been slated to send 70% of its generated power from Sarawak through the construction of 415 miles of overhead lines in eastern Malaysia, 400 miles of submarine distribution infrastructure in Peninsular Malaysia. In addition, expansion plans included a high voltage transmission line from north to Perlis, near the western Thai border. A local company, Ekran, was awarded a turnkey contract for the project in January 1995. In 1996, the construction contract went to Sweden's Asea Brown Boveri (ABB). However, the project has been delayed and is now expected to be completed in 2005.

1997, the Malaysian government announced that it was delaying the project indefinitely, citing an unexpected rise in the dam's cost due to the country's economic difficulties at the time.

In mid-1999, work resumed on the river diversion tunnels, a major component of the project, which has since been completed. The Malaysian government has taken control of the project and negotiated financial settlements with the firms involved. The subsea transmission line concept has been abandoned, and the Malaysian government is exploring the possibility of sales of electricity to Brunei and Indonesia . While it had appeared likely that the project would be scaled back from its 2,400-MW capacity, the Malaysian government announced in February 2001 that it had decided to complete the project on its original scale. Bids were received in July 2002 for the main construction work for the dam, and a construction contract was awarded to a consortium of six Malaysian and Chinese companies in March 2003. Current plans call for the 300-MW generating units to be brought online in stages, with the first capacity to come online in 2007. While electricity demand in Sarawak is modest (currently under 1 GW), the potential to use the electricity to develop a metal smelting industry in Sarawak is largely behind the renewed interest in the project.

Malaysia is considering reforms to its power sector to make it more competitive and lower costs. Currently, three state-owned utilities dominate power generation and distribution in Malaysia . The market was opened to independent power producers (IPPs) in 1994, and 15 IPPs were licensed, though not all of the projects have been built.

Tenaga Nasional Bhd, the main state-owned utility, began in 1999 to divest some of its power generation units. Eventually, Malaysia expects to achieve a fully competitive power market, with generation, transmission, and distribution decoupled, but reform is still at an early stage and the exact process of the transition to a competitive market has not been decided. The issue is still under study, and many observers have voiced caution in light of the experiences of other deregulated utility systems.

*Sources for this report include: Asiaweek; Bernama News Agency; Dow Jones Newswire service; Economist Intelligence Unit; Global Insight; Oil and Gas Journal; Petroleum Economist; Petroleum Intelligence Weekly; New Straits Times; Project Finance; The Star (Malaysia); U.S. Energy Information Administration; World Gas Intelligence.*

## **COUNTRY OVERVIEW**

**Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs:** Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (since October 2003)

**Independence:** August 31, 1957 (from United Kingdom)

**Population (2004E):** 23.5 million

**Location/Size:** Southeast Asia/127,320 sq. mi. (slightly larger than New Mexico)

**Major Cities:** Kuala Lumpur (capital), Ipoh, Melaka, Johor Baharu, Penang, Kota Baharu, Georgetown, Kuching

**Languages:** Malay (official), English, Chinese dialects, Tamil, tribal dialects

**Ethnic Groups:** Malay and other indigenous (58%), Chinese (26%), Indian (7%), others (9%)

**Religion:** Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Christianity, various tribal

## **ECONOMIC OVERVIEW**

**Currency:** Ringgit

**Market Exchange Rate (1/10/05):** \$1 = 3.8 ringgits

**Gross Domestic Product (market exchange rates) (2004E):** \$115.9 billion; **(2005F):** \$124.4 billion

**Real GDP Growth Rate (2004E):** 7.1%; **(2005F):** 5.2%

**Inflation Rate (consumer prices)(2004E):** 1.3%; **(2005F):** 1.9%

**Current Account Balance (2004E):** \$15.4 billion; **(2005F):** \$16.3 billion  
**Major Trading Partners (2004):** Singapore, Japan, United States, European Union  
**Merchandise Exports (2004E):** \$124.4 billion; **(2005F):** \$135.9 billion  
**Merchandise Imports (2004E):** \$98.0 billion; **(2005F):** \$108.5 billion  
**Major Export Products:** Petroleum and petroleum products, palm oil, rubber, tin, electronic equipment  
**Major Import Products:** machinery equipment, chemicals and food  
**External Debt (2004E):** \$36.0 billion

## ENERGY OVERVIEW

**Minister of Energy, Communications, and Multimedia:** Dato' Leo Moggie Anak Irok  
**Proven Oil Reserves (1/1/05E):** 3.0 billion barrels  
**Oil Production (2004E):** 855,000 barrels per day (bbl/d), of which 750,000 bbl/d is crude oil  
**Oil Consumption (2004E):** 534,000 bbl/d  
**Net Oil Exports (2004E):** 321,000 bbl/d  
**Crude Oil Refining Capacity (1/1/05E):** 544,832 bbl/d  
**Natural Gas Reserves (1/1/05E):** 75.0 trillion cubic feet (Tcf)  
**Natural Gas Production (2002E):** 1.7 Tcf  
**Natural Gas Consumption (2002E):** 1.0 Tcf  
**LNG Exports (2003E):** 0.8 Tcf  
**Coal Production (2002E):** 0.9 million short tons  
**Coal Consumption (2002E):** 6.9 million short tons  
**Net Coal Imports (2002E):** 6.0 million short tons  
**Electricity Generation Capacity (1/1/02):** 14 gigawatts (86% thermal, 14% hydroelectric)  
**Electricity Generation (2002E):** 67 billion kilowatthours

## ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

**Minister of Science, Technology and Environment:** Law Hieng Ding  
**Total Energy Consumption (2002E):** 2.3 quadrillion Btu\* (0.57% of world total energy consumption)  
**Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2002E):** 140.6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (0.57% of world total carbon dioxide emissions)  
**Per Capita Energy Consumption (2002E):** 97.1 million Btu (vs U.S. value of 339.1 million Btu)  
**Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2002E):** 5.9 metric tons of carbon dioxide (vs U.S. value of 20.0 metric tons of carbon dioxide)  
**Energy Intensity (2002E):** 12,027 Btu/\$1995 (vs U.S. value of 10,575 Btu/\$1995)\*\*  
**Carbon Dioxide Intensity (2002E):** 0.74 metric tons of carbon dioxide/thousand \$1995 (vs U.S. value of 0.62 metric tons/thousand \$1995)\*\*  
**Fuel Share of Energy Consumption (2002E):** Oil (44.4%), Natural Gas (44.8%), Coal (7.8%)  
**Fuel Share of Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2002E):** Oil (49.0%), Natural Gas (39.2%), Coal (11.8%)  
**Status in Climate Change Negotiations:** Non-Annex I country under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (ratified July 13th, 1994 ). Ratified the Kyoto Protocol on September 4, 2002 .  
**Major Environmental Issues:** Air pollution from industrial and vehicular emissions; water pollution from raw sewage; deforestation; smoke/haze from Indonesian forest fires.  
**Major International Environmental Agreements:** A party to Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94.

\* The total energy consumption statistic includes petroleum, dry natural gas, coal, net hydro, nuclear, geothermal, solar, wind, wood and waste electric power. The renewable energy consumption statistic is based on International Energy Agency (IEA) data and includes hydropower, solar, wind, tide, geothermal, solid biomass and animal products, biomass gas and liquids, industrial and municipal wastes. Sectoral shares of energy consumption and carbon emissions are also based on IEA data.

\*\*GDP based on OECD Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) figures for 2002

## **OIL AND GAS INDUSTRIES**

**Organization:** Malaysia 's national petroleum corporation, Petroliam Nasional Berhad (Petronas), was formed in 1974. Petronas controls oil production through partnerships with ExxonMobil (Esso Production Malaysia) and Shell (Sabah Shell Petroleum, Sarawak Shell Berhad, and Sarawak Shell/Petronas Carigali)

**Major Foreign Oil Company Involvement:** BP Amoco, Conoco, Enron, ExxonMobil, Lundin Oil, Murphy Oil, Nippon Mitsubishi Oil, Occidental, Shell, Texaco, Triton

**Major Oil Fields:** Bekok, Bokor, Erb West, Bunga Kekwa, Guntong, Kepong, Kinabalu Pulau, Samarang, Seligi, Semangkok, Tapis, Temana, Tiong

**Major Natural Gas Fields:** Bedong, Bintang, Damar, Jerneh, Laho, Lawit, Noring, Piong, Resak, Telok, Tujoh

**Major Oil Refineries (capacity - bbl/d):** Port Dickson-Shell (155,000), Melaka I (92,832), Melaka II (126,000), Kerteh-Petronas (40,000), Port Dickson-Esso (86,000), Lutong-Shell (45,000)

**Major Oil Pipelines:** Malaysia-Singapore pipeline, planned Malaysia - Songkhla (Thailand) product pipeline

**Major Oil Terminals:** Bintulu, Johor Baharu, Kerteh, Kuching, Melaka, Penang, Port Dickson, Port Kelang

## LINKS

For more information from EIA on Malaysia , please see:

[EIA - Country Information on Malaysia](#)

Links to other U.S. government sites:

[CIA World Factbook - Malaysia](#)

[U.S. Department of Energy - Office of Fossil Energy - Malaysia](#)

[U.S. State Department Consular Information Sheet - Malaysia](#)

[U.S. State Department Country Commercial Guide - Malaysia](#)

[U.S. Embassy in Malaysia](#)

The following links are provided solely as a service to our customers, and therefore should not be construed as advocating or reflecting any position of the Energy Information Administration (EIA) or the United States Government. In addition, EIA does not guarantee the content or accuracy of any information presented in linked sites.

[Malaysia's Department of the Environment, in the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment](#)

[Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations](#)

[Petronas](#)

[New Straits Times](#)

[Lonely Planet Guide: Malaysia](#)

You may be automatically notified via e-mail of updates to this or other Country Analysis Briefs. To join any of our mailing lists, go to [http://www.eia.doe.gov/listserv\\_signup.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/listserv_signup.html) and follow the directions given.

[Return to Country Analysis Briefs home page](#)

File last modified: January 12, 2005

Contact: Lowell Feld

[lfeld@eia.doe.gov](mailto:lfeld@eia.doe.gov)

Phone: (202)586-9502

Fax: (202)586-9753

[EIA Home](#)  
[Contact Us](#)

URL: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/malaysia.html>