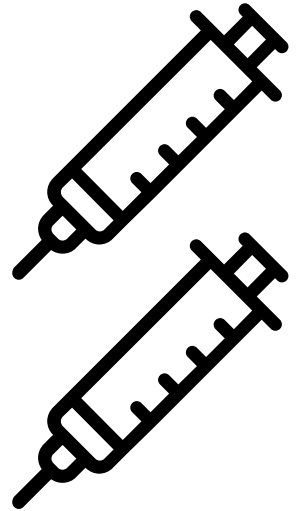


PROJEK MUHIBAH STRATEGY #04

OPENING UP ECONOMIC SECTORS SAFELY

PANDEMIC TO ENDEMIC – WHAT'S NEXT FOR MALAYSIA?

As of 14th September 2021, 75.4% of the adult population in Malaysia have received TWO doses of COVID-19 vaccine.



As Malaysia moves along the phases of the National Recovery Plan, we outline policy recommendations on how to open up the economy in a safe, responsible, science-based manner while also boosting overall public confidence.

**Here's our strategy
recommendations!**

1. OPEN THE ECONOMY WITH PROPER SEQUENCING

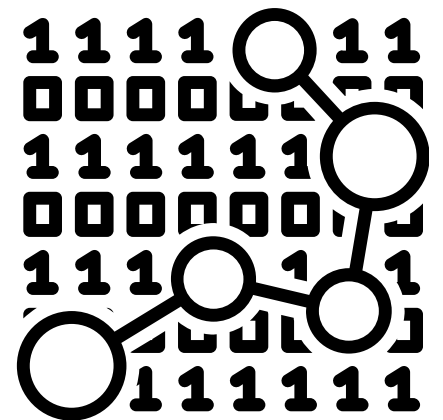
- **Abolish the categorisation of states** according to Phase 1 to Phase 4 .

if live musical shows and comedies are allowed at 30% capacity for fully vaccinated individuals, there should be no reason why gyms with stricter SOPs, more comprehensive ventilation guidelines, and proper physical distancing should not be allowed to operate with a reduced capacity.

- Proper sequencing of the re-opening must **respond to economic sectors** (not states) with differentiated SOPs, testing requirements and operating capacity based on data and science.
- The National Security Council must **avoid last-minute and piecemeal announcements.**

2. RELEASE MORE GRANULAR DATA TO BOOST PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

- Effective communication and transparent data will help address public confidence.
- While the Ministry of Health has openly shared pandemic-related data on github, leading to #CovidNow, more **district-level data** would be helpful to furnish various industries and public sectors with useful information.



If an explicit breakdown of the Category 1 to 5 COVID-19 patients can be shown for Selangor and KL respectively and if these figures show a significant downtrend over the past 2 weeks in the number of Category 3 to 5 cases, more consumers would feel safer coming out to dine-in and to visit shopping malls.

3. OPEN-UP BASED ON COMPARATIVE RISK AND SCIENCE, NOT BASED ON FEAR MONGERING

- Policy makers must clearly communicate the **scientific basis** of opening up various sectors of the economy (and not others) to avoid public skepticism.
- The government needs to recognize the **prevalence of irrational concern** by many people and take steps to **address these concerns** as much as possible.



COVID-19 will be here to stay for at least the next few years, if not longer. In response, we have to adjust our behaviour based on our own risk appetites rather than take out our irrational fears on others (assuming that proper SOPs are followed at all times).

4. OPEN UP THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The education sector must be considered an economic sector because of the short- and long-term effects it has on the larger economy. Here is a check-list of **pro-active measures** to ensure that schools are ready for reopening:

- ☐ Enforce proper SOPs such as the provision of facemasks to all teachers and students.
- ☐ Provide sufficient hand sanitizing facilities in every school.
- ☐ Allow only fully vaccinated teachers to teach.
- ☐ Consider providing teachers with self-testing kits for use on a regular basis.
- ☐ Ensure sufficient physical distancing in all classrooms.
- ☐ Ensure all classrooms are properly ventilated.
- ☐ Put in place SOP for dormitories and hostels.
- ☐ Facilitate the applications of vaccinated foreign students entering universities.

5. ALLOW INTERSTATE TRAVEL AND OPEN UP BORDERS FOR SAFE TRAVEL AND TOURISM

The tourism sector can have a faster recovery if the government puts in place policies which allow tourists from safe destinations. Here's a three-pronged approach:

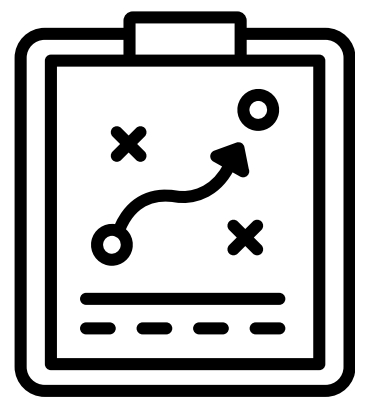
- Step 1: Gradually lift restrictions with clear SOPs – **regular coordination** between the federal, state and municipal governments as well as industry players to address real-time challenges quickly and effectively.
- Step 2: **Restore travellers confidence** – destination preparedness is crucial. Transparent information on destination risk should be provided to prospective visitors.
- Step 3: Make the tourism sector more **responsive and resilient.**



Check out UK's Tourism Recovery Plan!

6. EACH MINISTRY TO SUBMIT AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN TO THE NSC AND MKN FOR PUBLIC VIEWING

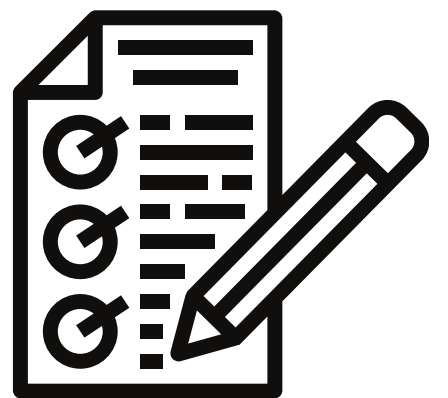
Each Ministry should come up with new proposals on how the sectors under their respective jurisdictions can build back better as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery plan.



The responsibility of economic recovery must not be seen as solely the responsibility of certain Ministries such as the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of International Trade and Industry only.

7. ISSUE CLEAR SOPS

- The more confusing and uncertain the SOPs, the slower will be the economic recovery.
- We need a **national testing strategy** that outlines testing programmes for different industries and categories of workers within these industries.
- Put in place a **track and trace system** that is efficient and comprehensive in order to deal with COVID-19 outbreaks with as little disruption as possible.
- Any lockdowns should be **targeted lockdowns** only and the economy should be allowed to continue with minimal disruptions.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you feel confident to patronise businesses once restrictions are lifted? What measure should the government take to ensure that we can move towards an endemic safely? Let us know in the comments section!

Read our full strategy paper at bit.ly/Muhibah4.

ABOUT #PROJEKMUHIBAH

Projek Muhibah introduces ten policies to address the socio-economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia.

The goal is to help Malaysia build back better, towards a more resilient and equitable economy, a more economically secure workforce, and a stronger and more supportive community.

Visit www.refsa.org/projek-muhibah for more information.