SME WEEKLY NEWS

(5 October 2020 – 9 October 2020)

Countries	Highlights
MALAYSIA **Facebook Malaysia launches small business grant programme**	Facebook Malaysia is launching its Small Business Grant Programme to support over 300 local small businesses, for which about RM3.2 million has been allocated. Its country director, Nicole Tan said each grant amounts to RM9,400, which includes RM5,900 in cash and RM3,500 in optional advertisement credits. To be eligible, businesses must have between two and 50 employees, been in business for more than one year and experienced challenges due to the pandemic. Businesses do not need to have Facebook presence in order to apply and the applications are open until 12 October 2020. In the World Bank's Global State of Small Business Report this year, it was revealed that nearly 58% of small and mid-size businesses surveyed in Malaysia were concerned about cash flow in the coming months. The report said these businesses are the backbone of the nation's economy and account for 38.9% of GDP, 48.4% of employment and 17.9% of Malaysia's export. *(Source: The Star, 6 October 2020)*
INDONESIA **Ministry, e-commerce team up to hold online classes for SMEs**	The government is joining hands with e-commerce players and tech firms to provide training for SMEs, to boost digital inclusion among small businesses and to improve their skills amid the Covid-19 crisis. Ministry of Communications and Information announced a partnership with Indonesian E-commerce Association (IdEA) to roll out online classes for 2,500 SMEs from 5 October to 12 December 2020. The program was aimed at SMEs outside of Java, particularly those in the outermost, frontier and the least developed (3T) regions and those located in the country's five priority tourism destinations, including Borobudur in Central Java, Mandalika in West Nusa Tenggara, and Lake Toba in North Sumatra. IdEA said that participants could join 60 classes such as digital branding, soft skill development and business financing. Currently, around 9.4 million SMEs had gone online to date, closing in on the government's target of having 10 million SMEs going digital by the end of the year. A Mandiri Institute study shows that digitalized MSMEs can help Indonesia significantly reduce the GDP impact of the pandemic. The study also found that MSMEs that have an online presence are more resilient, as they are more likely to continue producing and selling goods and to have a longer runway to survive the health crisis. *(Source: The Jakarta Post, 5 October 2020)*
SINGAPORE **Loan repayment relief measures for individuals, SMEs extended into 2021**	Relief measures to help individuals and SMEs with cash flow difficulties will be extended into 2021. This is intended to give those who have applied to defer loan repayments more time to resume their debt servicing. The reliefs are also available to those who have not applied to defer payments previously, but are now facing cash flow challenges. The extended measures will allow both individuals and businesses to transition gradually to full loan repayments, as the central bank and the financial industry recognise that many will continue to experience cash flow pressures into early 2021. The Extended Support Scheme - Standardised will allow businesses in sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic to defer 80% of principal payments until 30 June 2021. This applies to SMEs in the following sectors: aviation and aerospace, tourism, hospitality, conventions and exhibitions, built environment, licensed food shops and food stalls, qualifying retail outlets, arts and entertainment, marine and offshore, as well as land transport. Firms in other sectors can apply to defer 80% of principal payments until 31 March 2021. Loans granted under Enterprise Singapore's (ESG) enhanced working capital loan scheme and temporary bridging loan programme are also eligible for deferment. *(Source: Straits Times, 5 October 2020)*

VIETNAM **Vietnam launches courses for workers affected by pandemic**	A series of short training courses has been introduced in eight cities and provinces across Vietnam, in efforts to help about 1,000 workers who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a collaboration between German development agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Vietnam's General Directorate of Vocational Training, and the relevant departments of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs. The training courses, which begin in October and will last for two months, will focus on industrial occupations which are more resilient to Covid-19's impact as compared to those in sectors such as hospitality and tourism. These include mechanics, industrial electrics and electronics, plumbing, building electronics, wastewater treatment, and automotive. Further, it targets workers who are either unemployed or underemployed and at high risk of losing their jobs as a result of the pandemic, such as in Ho Chi Minh City and Nha Trang City. Since 2017, a series of training programmes for these occupations have been piloted in 11 TVET institutes, as part of the Vietnamese-German 'Reform of TVET in Vietnam' programme. *(Source: Human Resource Online, 8 October 2020)*

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