

Mobility: Immigration alert

September 2022



Malaysia

New DE Rantau Nomad Pass for digital nomads

Executive summary

Effective 1 October 2022, the Malaysian government will begin accepting applications for the DE Rantau Nomad Pass. This new Professional Visit Pass for digital nomads will allow holders to work remotely from within Malaysia for up to two years and sponsor qualifying dependents.

Background

In general, the term “digital nomads” refers to individuals who are employed and receive salaries and benefits in one country (i.e., the home country) but work remotely from another country or multiple other countries (i.e., the host country). Digital nomads are typically not permitted to earn remuneration in the host country/countries.

Prior to the introduction of the DE Rantau Nomad Pass, eligible foreign citizens could enter Malaysia as tourists using Social Visit Passes and stay in the country for up to 90 days. However, Social Visit Passes do not authorize holders to work remotely from within Malaysia. Further, the Malaysia Tech Entrepreneur Programme (MTEP) Pass is available only to qualifying foreign nationals who are new or experienced tech entrepreneurs and who seek to enter Malaysia to establish a business. The DE Rantau Nomad Pass is the first pass introduced by the Malaysian government that allows holders to work remotely from within Malaysia.

Eligibility criteria

The DE Rantau Nomad Pass is available to the following categories of foreign nationals in the information technology, digital marketing, digital creative content and digital content development sectors, provided they earn more than USD 24,000 annually (or the equivalent in another currency):

- ▶ Digital freelancers and independent contractors who have contracts that are valid for more than three months with one or more Malaysian or non-Malaysian clients at the time of filing their application
- ▶ Full-time or part-time remote workers who have been employed with a non-Malaysian company for more than three months at the time of filing their application

Individuals can apply for the DE Rantau Nomad Pass [online](#). Principal applicants and their dependents will be subject to application processing fees of MYR 1,000 (USD 215) and MYR 500 (USD 108), respectively. Successful applicants will initially be granted DE Rantau Nomad Passes that are valid for up to 12 months, and they may renew their Passes for an additional 12 months.

The DE Rantau Nomad Pass is not available to foreign remote workers whose employers are present in Malaysia via an

incorporated company. These individuals are required to obtain an alternative work visa.

Benefits

DE Rantau Nomad Pass holders can enter Malaysia without being sponsored by a local entity, travel across the country and work remotely from various locations. They can sponsor their spouses and children provided they meet all relevant criteria for dependents. Under the DE Rantau program, they will also have access to convenient living and co-working spaces as well as specially curated services and facilities for digital nomads. The Malaysian government has not yet announced tax benefits for DE Rantau Nomad Pass holders and beneficiaries under this program.

Impact on employers

The introduction of the DE Rantau Nomad Pass is aimed at promoting digital professional mobility in Malaysia and will enable employers to expand their talent pool by attracting skilled foreign workers. It remains to be seen whether employers that hire DE Rantau Nomad Pass holders will be eligible to receive tax benefits in the future.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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