



Frequently Asked Questions:

SECTION A: GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass is a type of Professional Visit Pass newly designed to allow qualified foreign digital nomads to travel and work in Malaysia for up to 12 months, which can be renewed for another 1-year.

What is the type of pass offered and its duration?

Professional Visit Pass (Pas Lawatan Ikhtisas) valid between 3 to 12 months of stay with the option to renew for additional 12 months, allowing total of 24 months of stay.

Who is a digital nomad?

A Digital Nomad performs work remotely on a freelance basis with no attachment to specific company or location and lives a nomadic lifestyle by travelling from one country to another to gain job opportunity, exposure, content, and experience.

How do I become a DE Rantau Sarawak nomad?

Please confirm your criteria with the eligibility requirements of your respective category - local or foreign nomad and proceed with the application process. Do reach out to us should you have any queries.



What is the requirement to be considered as a digital nomad?

Criteria	Foreign Digital Nomad	
Type of Digital Nomad	Digital freelancer, independent contractor	Remote worker i.e. employee of a company but not required to physically be in the office
Domain of Profession	IT (all types - software dev, UX, UI, cloud, cybersecurity, blockchain, AI, machine learning, data-related etc.), digital marketing, digital creative content, digital content development (All digital domain related work)	
Proof of work	Active project contract.	Active employment contract.
	Contract duration > 3 months, can be multiple contracts.	Contract duration > 3 months.
	Clientele is foreign/ Malaysian based companies.	Employer is foreign/ non-Malaysian based companies.
Annual Income	> USD24,000 per year.	

What is the difference between DE Rantau Digital Nomad (Foreign) and DE Rantau Sarawak (Foreign)?

The De Rantau Digital nomad only allowed to work in Peninsular Malaysia while The DE Rantau Digital Nomad Sarawak (Foreign) allows you to travel and work in both Sarawak and in any states of Peninsula Malaysia. Due to Sarawak's autonomy on immigration which regulates and controls the entry and exit of non-citizens and non-Sarawakians, only nomads with a valid DE Rantau Digital Nomad Sarawak (Foreign) pass are allowed to work in Sarawak.



What are the fees involved for the application of DE Rantau Sarawak?

Processing fee per applicant	RM2,160 (incl. 8% SST; Sales & Service tax)
Processing fees per dependent	RM1,080 (Incl. 8% SST)
Immigration Pass Fee per applicant	RM90 (every 3 month); RM360 (1 year)
Multiple Entry Visa Charge (If applicable)	**Charges vary across countries

Fees of RM2,160.00 per applicant and RM1,080.00 for each dependent are to be paid upon submission of application for all categories and are non-refundable. All fees are subject to 8% SST. All payment is to be made upon application and is payable to Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad via online payment.

What are the benefits of becoming a member of DE Rantau Sarawak?

Members of DE Rantau Sarawak are eligible to get access to benefits provided for digital nomads such as nomad-ready living and working hubs, handpicked local services, discount vouchers, latest information and promotions.

Can De Rantau Sarawak bring family?

Only immediate family members (dependent) of the main pass holder are eligible to apply.

- a. Husband / Wife/ Common-Law partner.
- b. Child, adopted child or stepchild under the age of 18 years.
- c. Disabled child (no age limit) verified by experts.
- d. Parent/parents to main pass holder only

Can my spouse work in Malaysia under this pass?

No.

Can a dependent enter Malaysia later, and not together with the main applicant?

A dependent has an option either to enter Malaysia together with main pass holder or to enter individually after main pass holder is in Malaysia.



Will this pass be multi-entry?

Yes, this pass allows multiple entries.

What happens if my passport (or my dependant's passport) has less than 6 months validity before expiring at the point of application and during the validity period of DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

The validity of the passport must be more than 14 months upon submission of application. Thus, if the validity is less than 14 months, you need to apply for a new passport.

Does DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass allow me to open a local bank account?

Most banks in Malaysia do not accept Professional Visit Pass for the applicant to open a bank account. You may seek further clarifications with the respective bank of interest.

Can my child attend school in Malaysia while holding the DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad dependent pass?

For child of DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad holders who wish to study in Malaysia, please apply for a Student Pass via the school. Please check directly with the relevant schools for further clarifications before applying. However, the Student Pass is not required for the dependent who is home schooling.

Can I stay in any states in Peninsular Malaysia using DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

Yes.

Can I stay in Sabah using DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

At the moment, DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad pass facilitates your stay only in Sarawak and any states in Peninsular Malaysia. You can still travel to Sabah, but your entry into Sabah will be using the tourist pass.

Is this open to all nationalities?

The pass is open for application for citizens of all nationalities. However, approval from Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia is required for Israel Citizen to enter Malaysia.





Is there any minimum age requirement for the DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

The main pass holder must be over 18 years old.

Can I work and travel in Sarawak with De Rantau Nomad Pass?

No. You will need to apply for DE Rantau (Sarawak) Nomad Pass for you to be eligible to work and stay in Sarawak.

Do I need to pay income tax in Malaysia?

Yes.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

Office Address	Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) Level 6, Wisma Satok, Jalan Satok, 93400 Kuching, Sarawak
Call	1-800-88-8338 (within Malaysia) +603-8315-3000 (International)
Email	clic@mdec.com.my



SECTION B: PASS APPLICATION

Where do I apply for the DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

All applications must be made online at:

<https://mdec.my/derantau/foreign/>

How do I apply online?

1. Create an account
2. Fill in an online application form
3. Upload supporting documents
4. Pay application fee
5. Wait for the application outcome
6. Application outcome will be notified by email
7. Pay for personal bond & visa (if applicable)
8. Submit documents
9. Collect visa sticker at Immigration Sarawak Office

How long does the application process take?

The application will be processed within 6 to 8 weeks upon receipt of the completed submission. However, the application processing time may prolong/will be extended if we require further information/documents during the due diligence exercise.

The issuance of pass sticker will be issued to the DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass holder within 1 week at Sarawak Immigration Office, Simpang Tiga, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

What are the documents that I need to submit as proof that I am a digital freelancer or a remote worker earning >USD24,000 (Tech Talent) per annum?

If you are a digital freelancer, the documents required are your contracts or purchase orders or invoices with your clients, clearly stating the contract duration and value.





If you are a remote worker, the document required is your active employment contract with a non-Malaysian company, with monthly or annual salary clearly stated, with indication that you are not required to work from the office and are allowed to work remotely.

I am a freelance digital content creator. I do not have specific contracts with any clients, but I receive income from a digital content platform. Can I submit this as proof of my income & my profession as a freelance digital content creator?

You need to provide proof that you are a digital freelancer. You may submit documents to prove that your income is generated from the digital content platform. Your annual income should be >USD24,000 per year.

Can I submit my application in my own language?

Applications and supporting documents MUST be in English.

What is the validity of the approval?

The approval is valid for 3 months and non-extendable.

How do I check the status of my application?

Application status is available at: <https://malaysiadigital.mdec.my>

What is a sponsor and who can be a sponsor?

A sponsor is an organization which will be able to vouch for your presence in Malaysia and also be responsible for your stay, maintenance, and repatriation while you reside in Malaysia.

Sponsoring organization: A sponsoring organization must be a company registered in Malaysia that gets services and awards project(s) to the Digital Nomad. The sponsoring organization shall sign a personal bond document.

If you are unable to find a sponsor, SDEC shall be the sponsoring organization. The following terms and conditions apply:

1) Deposit to be paid to SDEC. The amount is similar to the security bond amount. The payment can be made via online payment.





2) An agreement shall be signed with SDEC as a sponsor.

Are there any charges if SDEC becomes the sponsoring organization?

A security bond will have to be paid as per the rates. You will be refunded the full amount when your pass expires.

What are the documents required for the sponsor?

Personal bond/Security Bond document or Declaration form. This document must be affixed with RM10.00 revenue stamp and endorsed by Inland Revenue Board (IRB).

What happens if my application is rejected?

If your application is rejected, you may appeal within 1 month from the rejection date.

Will I get a refund if my application is rejected?

No.

What should I do after I obtain approval?

Applicants will be notified of the next steps via registered email to sign a contract agreement and to make payments.

For applicants who are abroad

For foreigners who require a visa to enter Malaysia, you may apply for e-visa via <https://malaysiavisa.imi.gov.my/evisa/evisa.jsp> or visit the Embassy/Consulate of Malaysia as stated in the approval letter.

For applicants in Malaysia

If you have entered Malaysia as a tourist, you are required to leave Malaysia and re-enter Malaysia once your application is approved. If you are in Malaysia with long term pass i.e Employment Pass/Student Pass, please refer to question 17 and 18.

How do I submit the documents required for the issuance of pass?

Online submission through email.





How do I collect the pass sticker?

For issuance of pass sticker:

Sarawak Immigration Office, Simpang Tiga, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Operating hours: 7:30am until 5:30pm on Monday to Friday/ Friday close at 12:15pm until 2:45pm. Saturday to Sunday: 8:00 am until 1:00 pm.

<https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/operation-hours/>

What are the operating hours for the customer-care hotline centre?

Customer Care Hotline Centre (MDEC Expat Service Centre, HQ)

Operating hours: 8.00am until 12.30pm | 2:00pm until 4:30pm on Monday to Thursday, and 8.00am until 12.00pm | 2:45pm until 4:30pm on Friday.

<https://mdec.my/expats/contact>

What happens after my pass has expired?

You will be able to renew your pass 2 months before the expiry of the current pass.

How long is the process for renewal application?

The renewal application will be processed within 6-8 weeks upon receipt of the completed submission. The issuance of pass will be completed within 1 week (subjected to the Immigration Department's discretion).

I am currently in the first year of De Rantau Nomad Pass. Can I apply for DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass after my current De Rantau Nomad Pass ends?

Yes. You can apply for DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass if you have not reached 2 years maximum stay in Malaysia (includes Sarawak).

I am currently in the second year (renewal) of De Rantau Nomad Pass. Can I apply for DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass after I complete my two years stay under De Rantau Nomad Pass?

Currently, the digital nomad pass only permits a maximum of 2 years stay in Malaysia (includes Sarawak).



I am currently on an Employment Pass, and I plan to be on DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass when my current pass expires. How do I do this? Do I need to leave Malaysia before I apply for DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass?

You may apply for the DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass while in Malaysia. You are required to provide a release letter from your employer and to shorten the Employment Pass if you do not wish to leave Malaysia.

I am currently an international student holding a Student Pass. I plan to be on DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass upon completing my study. Can I convert my Student Pass to be DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass? How do I do this?

No. You cannot convert your Student Pass to be DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass. However, you may apply for the DE Rantau Sarawak Nomad Pass while in Malaysia. You are required to provide a release letter from your university to confirm the completion of your study with a full transcript, to shorten the student pass.

As a DE Rantau Nomad Pass holder, can I use the Automated Entry Systems (Autogate) facility at KLIA?

The Autogate at KLIA Terminal 1 & Terminal 2 can be used by the DE Rantau Nomad Pass Holder upon returning entry.

To utilize this facility, applicants are required to register with Malaysia Digital Arrival Card (MDAC) at <https://imigresen-online.imi.gov.my/mdac/main> and submit the application 3 days before arrival.



SECTION C: PAYMENTS

What is the fee structure and when do I make the payment?

Processing fee per applicant	RM2,160.00 (incl. 8% SST (SALES & SERVICE TAX))
Processing fee per dependent	RM1,080.00 (incl. 8% SST)
Immigration Pass Fee per applicant	RM90 (every 3 months) RM360 (1 year)
Multiple Entry Visa Charges (if applicable)	Charges vary across countries

Fees of RM2,160.00 per applicant and RM1,080.00 for each dependent are to be paid upon submission of application for all categories and are non-refundable.

All fees are subject to 8% SST. All payment is to be made upon application and is payable to Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Sdn Bhd via online payment.



What is the rate for personal bond if SDEC becomes the sponsoring organization?

Security Bond		
RM2,000.00	RM1,500.00	RM750.00
Canada	Saudi Arabia	Bangladesh *
USA	Africa	Philippines
Colombia	Australia	India
Angola	British C.I	Myanmar
Burkina Faso	Brunei	Nepal
Central African Republic	China *	Pakistan
Republic Congo	Europe	Sri Lanka
Burundi	Iran	RM500.00
Republic Democratic Congo	Iraq	Indonesia
Cameroon	Portugal C.I	RM300.00
Cote D'Ivoire	Taiwan	Thailand
Djibouti	Tunisia	RM200.00
Equatorial Guinea	Vietnam	Singapore
Eritrea	RM1,000.00	RM1,500.00
Ethiopia	Japan	Others
Guinea-Bissau	South Korea	
Ghana	Macao	
Liberia	Hong Kong	
Mali		
Mozambique		
Niger		
Nigeria		
Rwanda		
Western Sahara		

Is a Bank Guarantee required for nationals of China and Bangladesh to apply for the DE Rantau Nomad Pass?

The bank guarantee requirement for these nationalities has been waived.



SECTION D: TAX TREATMENT FOR DE RANTAU SARAWAK NOMADS

What is the tax residency rule in Malaysia? Do the nomad become a tax resident if they stay for more than 182 days?

Provisions under section 7 of the Income Tax Act 1967 (ITA). According to this provision, individuals who are in Malaysia for more than 182 days are considered to be resident in Malaysia and are liable to tax.

If the nomad works remotely for a foreign company while living in Malaysia, do they need to pay Malaysian tax?

Subsection 13(2) of the ITA provides that employment income is deemed to be derived from Malaysia when the employment is carried out in Malaysia. Therefore, income attributable to the carrying out of employment in Malaysia will be taxable in Malaysia.

Do nomads need to register for a tax file in Malaysia as a digital nomad?

If an individual is liable to tax in Malaysia based on subsection 13(2) of the ITA, then the individual is required to submit an Income Tax Return Form as provided under subsection 77(1) of the ITA. You are advised to refer to the Tax Operations Department for further information.

Are there tax benefits for digital nomads?

None. Tax treatment is the same as the normal tax treatment prescribed under the ITA for individuals according to their resident status/residency status.

How do nomads declare income if nomads earn from multiple international sources?

Referring to the domestic taxation law (ACP), income derived from Malaysia will be taxed in Malaysia and must be reported in accordance with subsection 77(1) of the ACT. Therefore, income derived from other countries must be referred to the respective domestic taxation law.



Are there any double taxation agreements (DTAs) between Malaysia and the home country?

Please refer to the International Taxation Department (JPCA) for more information.

Do I need to pay tax if I receive cryptocurrency or freelance payments from abroad?

Please refer to the Guidelines on Tax Treatment of Digital Currency Transactions and the Guidelines on Tax Treatment of Income Received from Abroad for more information.

What expenses can I deduct as a digital nomad for tax purposes Malaysia?

If income is derived from Malaysia and is taxable in Malaysia, then the provisions under subsection 33(1) of the ITA apply.

What expenses can I deduct as a digital nomad for tax purposes Malaysia?

Tax liability is the same from a taxation perspective.

How do nomads file tax returns in Malaysia, and what deadlines should be aware of?

Please refer to the Return Filing Program on the Official Revenue Portal at www.hasil.gov.my or refer to the Tax Operations Department.

Are digital nomads subject to Malaysia's Sales and Service Tax (SST) or GST?

Not applicable

If the nomad leaves Malaysia before 182 days, do nomad still owe any taxes?

If the employment period is less than 60 days, then the individual is not subject to tax in Malaysia (Exception under Paragraphs 21 & 22, Schedule 6, ITA). However, if the employment period exceeds 60 days, then the tax treatment is as stipulated under the provisions of the act.

Are there any reports that can be provided to SDEC regarding nomads' tax filling?

Not applicable



What are the circumstances nomads need to pay tax in Malaysia?

The scope of income tax in Malaysia is stated in section 3 of the Income Tax Act (ITA) which is “subject to and in accordance with this Act, a tax to be known as income tax shall be charged for each year of assessment upon the income of any person accruing in or derived from Malaysia or received in Malaysia from outside Malaysia”.

This means that income tax will be charged for each year of assessment upon the income of any person accruing in or derived from Malaysia or received in Malaysia from outside Malaysia. Accordingly, any receipts that arise or accrue or are obtained from Malaysia are eligible for tax according to the concept of section 3 of the ITA.

In addition, subsection 13(2) of the ITA also provides that employment income is deemed to be derived from Malaysia when employment is carried out in Malaysia. Therefore, income associated with carrying out employment in Malaysia will be taxed in Malaysia.

I am already paying tax in my home-country, do I still have to pay in Malaysia?

If employment income is taxable in Malaysia and in a foreign country, and if there is a tax treaty between the two countries, Malaysian tax law provides relief in the form of a bilateral credit under section 132 of the ITA.

How do I know how much tax to pay?

Tax calculation is based on the total income derived from Malaysia which is calculated according to the tax rate based on the individual's resident status/residency status.

- Non-resident: Flat rate 30%
- Resident: Scale rate (refer to tax rates in Part 1, Schedule 1, ITA)



Can I apply with bank/investment statements instead of income proof? My projects are not profitable, but I have enough savings, and I also have a tech work portfolio.

No, you cannot. According to the requirements, you must provide proof of earning at least USD 24,000 per year. This must be shown through active contracts, invoices, or employment letters that clearly state the income amount and duration.

Bank statements are only supporting documents, not the main proof, and investment statements or savings are not accepted as a substitute. While your tech portfolio shows your skills, it does not count as financial proof. Therefore, if you cannot meet the minimum income requirement, you may not be eligible.

For those who had to leave Malaysia to get the approval, how long were you out before receiving it? What was the average waiting time for most people?

The standard processing time is 6 to 8 weeks from the date of submission. However, it may take longer if additional documents or information are required during the review. Once approved, the pass sticker is usually issued within 1 week.

I want to extend my De Rantau visa. My child's passport will have less than 1 year validity then. If we renew his passport, can we transfer the dependent visa to the new one? How long does it take?

Passports must have at least 14 months validity when applying. Since your child's passport will have less than 1 year left, you will need to renew it first before extending the visa.



My De Rantau application is 'In Progress'. Can I enter Malaysia on a tourist visa to wait for approval? Are there legal or practical issues? If it takes over 90 days, can I do a border run or leave temporarily?

1. You may enter on a tourist visa if you meet entry requirements, but immigration officers decide final entry. Ensure your purpose matches the visa type and you have return tickets, funds, etc.
2. Working is strictly prohibited on a tourist visa.
3. Overstaying leads to fines, detention, deportation or bans.
4. Border runs are not officially encouraged; repeated ones may raise suspicion and risk denial of re-entry.

I can't seem to find how to make an appointment to the Malaysian embassy here in the Philippines. Do I just walk in? My flight or first trip rather is on May 1st. I saw that on first entry I'm supposed to go and process my visa once I enter Malaysia. But given I may not have everything by then is it possible for me to just continue the process when I get the other documents. I do still have visa free entry for the first 30 days. I could fly back for example if I get an appointment in the Philippine embassy after May 1st. To sort out my paper work.

1. Regarding the issue of not being able to find how to make an appointment with the Malaysian Embassy in the Philippines, you can find the details of the Malaysian Embassy in Manila on the website. We advise you to contact the office directly via phone or visit in person for assistance, as operating procedures may vary between embassy offices.
2. We wish to reiterate that the Reference Visa is the only valid document required to collect and activate your DE Rantau Sarawak Pass.
3. Please note that entering Malaysia on a Social Visit Pass while your application is still pending is not acceptable. If you do so, you will be required to leave and re-enter using the proper Reference Visa to complete the activation process, as the Social Visit Pass is strictly for short-term visits and cannot be used or converted for this purpose.
4. Kindly be aware that SDEC will not be liable for any travel arrangements, changes, or costs incurred related to your itinerary or visa status.





Can dependent use the pass to study at public or international/private school in Sarawak or Peninsular Malaysia?

No, the dependent needs to apply for a student pass in order to enrol school in Malaysia. If the school is in Sarawak, can apply the Student Pass in Sarawak, but if the school is in West Malaysia, they need to apply it in West Malaysia.

