

Global Immigration alert

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Malaysia

Malaysia introduces new online portal and additional requirements for Sabah Work Pass applications

Executive summary

Following recently [announced](#) changes, the Sabah State Government in Malaysia has introduced several more additional requirements for employers applying for Work Passes (WP) in the Sabah region. Effective 1 September 2026, the Sabah Work Pass [Online System](#) (SWPOS) was officially launched, a new digital platform for the submission and management of Sabah WP applications in the oil, gas, and energy sector. In addition, employers must now provide an Integrated Non-Resident Employment Management System (eNORES) Registration Confirmation Letter as part of Sabah WP applications.

The authorities have also confirmed that the revised expatriate salary policy, which took effect in Peninsular Malaysia on 1 June 2026, now also applies to expatriates in Sabah.

Background

In Malaysia, the state of Sabah, which sits on the island of Borneo, holds autonomy over the state's own immigration borders. All non-Sabahan Malaysians and foreign nationals are required to obtain a Work Pass (WP) to conduct work in the state.

Previously, Sabah WP applications in the oil, gas and energy sector were submitted manually and did not require a Certificate of Good Conduct (COGC), an eNORES confirmation letter or specification of the work location. The Sabah authorities also initially provided no guidance on the implementation of the revised salary policy that took effect in Peninsular Malaysia on 1 June 2026.

Key developments

Key developments include:

- **Introduction of SWPOS:** The Sabah State Government has introduced SWPOS, a new online platform developed in collaboration with Petroliaam Nasional Berhad (PETRONAS) to facilitate the submission and processing of Sabah WP applications. The platform supports the online submission and approval of WP applications for all non-Sabahans

(i.e., expatriates and non-Sabahan Malaysians) working in the oil, gas and energy sector in Sabah.

Although SWPOS was launched on 4 August 2026, the transition from the manual process to the online submission process commenced on 1 September 2026 and employers are currently being onboarded onto the new platform.

The platform is expected to support the processing of applications within 14 working days and includes key features such as:

- Electronic submission of work pass applications
 - Upload of supporting documentation
 - Online monitoring of application status
 - Coordination with the relevant immigration and labor authorities
- **eNORES Registration Confirmation Letter:** Effective 1 September 2026, employers must provide the eNORES Registration Confirmation Letter to the Malaysian Immigration Department (MID) in Sabah for new and renewal WP applications and during the WP endorsement process. This letter can be obtained within two to three working days once the WP applicant's details have been registered on the eNORES online portal.
 - **Revised salary requirement:** Sabah authorities confirmed during the most recent Sabah Oil & Gas Industry Talent Alignment Forum (SOGITAF) event that the revised expatriate salary framework is already applicable in Peninsular Malaysia for Employment Pass (EP) applications and confirmed that the same has now been implemented for Sabah expatriate WP applications lodged on or after 1 June 2026. These revised requirements apply only to expatriates in Sabah (non-Sabahan Malaysians are not impacted), for both new and renewal applications. Further guidance on implementation, including succession planning requirements, remains pending.

Impact on employers

Employers in Sabah should prepare for the new digital process and evolving compliance requirements by:

- Reviewing compensation and workforce plans to ensure compliance with revised WP salary thresholds and applicable succession planning requirements.
- Aligning internal processes, documentation and immigration records with SWPOS requirements, including obtaining an eNORES confirmation letter where applicable and accurately reflecting employees' approved work locations.
- Obtaining COGCs before filing applications.
- Reviewing upcoming assignments, renewals and dependent applications, particularly in the oil and gas sector, for potential impacts during implementation of the new procedures.

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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