

PROGRAMME

MTEP

Malaysia Tech Entrepreneur
Programme

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE MALAYSIA TECH ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAMME

MTEP Malaysia

Eligibility, documents, fees and how to apply for the tech
founder visa

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WEB VERSION

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The latest version of this guide, with the interactive tools, is at
foundingbird.com/my/guides/the-complete-mtep-visa-guide/.

Hi there,

I'm Dylan, Founder & CEO at foundingbird.com. I came to Malaysia on the MTEP pass myself and started Foundingbird here.

When I applied, I liked how the programme was set up. Finding clear, current information about it was harder. Since then, we've helped many founders get their pass, set up their company here and renew.

This is the guide I wish I'd had back then.

Best,

Dylan Damsma

The short version

- **What it is:** a pass from MDEC that lets foreign tech founders live in Malaysia and build their own digital business here.
- **Two categories:** New Entrepreneur (a 1-year pass, renewable once) and Established Entrepreneur (up to 5 years, renewable once, with family).
- **Your own technology:** MDEC looks closely at technical potential. If your product could be copied or rebuilt with AI in a day, it won't be enough.
- **What you need:** a tech product in a targeted sector, a pitch deck, RM50,000 in your personal bank account for 3 months, a Letter of Good Conduct and a sponsor.
- **Cost:** a RM540 application fee, then RM2,520 (New) or from RM5,360 (Established) in processing and pass fees after approval.
- **Time:** MDEC processes your application within 4 weeks of a complete submission, then Immigration issues the pass.



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including RM1,010 SSM fees,
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3–5 working days

to incorporate



Registered address

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01

SECTION 1

What Is MTEP?

The Malaysia Tech Entrepreneur Programme (MTEP) is a government initiative managed by [MDEC](#), the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation, under the Ministry of Digital. It's designed to attract foreign technology entrepreneurs, both founders and co-founders, to set up and grow innovative digital businesses in Malaysia.

MTEP gives you an immigration pass. MDEC assesses and approves your application, and the Immigration Department of Malaysia issues the pass itself.

There are two categories:

- **New Entrepreneur:** for founders with an innovative business idea in the digital or tech space, who don't have a track record of an established business yet.
- **Established Entrepreneur:** for founders with a proven track record of at least 3 years, backed by financial records.

You'll sometimes see different names for these. "New Tech Entrepreneur" and "Experienced Tech Entrepreneur" are the same two categories.

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SECTION 2

Who Can Apply?

MTEP is for technology entrepreneurs: technical founders and co-founders of digital and tech-driven ventures. AI ventures are a priority under the National AI Action Plan 2026–2030.

The basics:

- **Age:** at least 18 years old when you apply.
- **Nationality:** open to all nationalities except citizens of Israel, subject to immigration rules and approval.
- **Technical background:** the programme is aimed at technical founders. Non-technical founders can apply, but whether they're eligible is up to the MTEP Panel.
- **Co-founders:** up to 2 founders per application as New Entrepreneurs, and up to 3 as Established Entrepreneurs. Every applicant has to show their shareholding in the company, and proof of shareholding is required when you renew.
- **Education:** you don't need a degree. But if you don't have a qualification from a higher education institution (diploma, bachelor's, master's or PhD), you'll need to show how you gained the knowledge to start the company.
- **Language:** everything has to be in English. Documents in another language need to be translated into English by a certified translator or agency, and certified as a true copy by the nearest Malaysian consulate.

Targeted sectors

These are the targeted sectors and technologies:



Data, AI & security



Artificial Intelligence



Big Data Analytics



Blockchain



Cyber Security



Internet of Things

Industry tech



AgriTech



CleanTech



FinTech



HealthTech

Cities & mobility



Smart City



Smart Mobility



DroneTech

What doesn't qualify

You need to be building your own technology. These activities **don't** qualify for MTEP:

- Trading, marketplace or reselling activity
- Manufacturing
- Provision of telco services
- Consultancy
- Software integration
- Co-working spaces
- Service-related activities, such as design and support, outsourcing or freelancing services

If you're bringing an existing technology or business model into Malaysia, MDEC expects your application to include reasonable enhancements and added value for the Malaysian market.

COMPANY	WOULD IT LIKELY QUALIFY?
A startup building its own AI-powered crop disease detection app	Yes, its own AgriTech and AI product
A team developing its own blockchain platform for supply chain tracking	Yes, its own blockchain technology
A startup designing its own drones for agricultural surveying	Yes, its own drone technology
An IT consulting firm advising banks on digital transformation	No, consultancy
A company reselling and integrating existing software for clients	No, reselling and software integration
An online shop selling smart home devices	No, trading

COMPANY	WOULD IT LIKELY QUALIFY?
A recruitment agency specialising in tech talent	No, a service business with no technology of its own
A company that customises and deploys open-source software for clients	No, integration and customisation, not its own development

Ask yourself: "Am I building something new of my own, or am I reselling, integrating or consulting on existing technology?"

Your technology has to be defensible

This is the part founders underestimate most. It's generally expected that you have a tech background. If you've never worked in tech or at a startup, or never developed a product, you may have a harder time convincing the panel. In our experience, MDEC has become stricter, and the panel looks closely at technical potential. Having a tech product isn't enough. It has to be yours, and it has to be hard to copy. If someone could rebuild it with AI in a day, expect a rejection.

What we see working:

- **Your own codebase or IP**, built by you or your team
- **Proprietary data** that others can't easily get
- **Your own algorithms or models**, not just a call to someone else's
- **A hard technical problem** you're solving, and can explain
- **A technical founder or team** who built the product and can talk about how it works

What we see getting rejected:

- A thin wrapper around an AI API, such as a chatbot or writing tool on top of a public model
- A white-label app with your logo on it
- A product built for you by an agency or outsourced team, with no technical person on your side
- A no-code clone of an existing product

If you're not sure where your product falls, [message us on WhatsApp](#) before you apply.

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SECTION 3

New Entrepreneur vs Established Entrepreneur

	NEW ENTREPRENEUR	ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEUR
Pass	Professional Visit Pass (PVP-MTE)	Residence Pass (RP-MTE)
How long	1 year, renewable once for 1 more year	Up to 5 years, renewable once for up to 5 more
Who it's for	A founder with an innovative digital business idea	A founder with a track record of at least 3 years
Product stage	At least beta	At least MVP for a new product, or enhancements for the Malaysian market if you bring an existing product
Company	Not needed to apply; incorporate within 1 year, at a recognised Malaysia Digital Hub	Not needed to apply; can be anywhere in Malaysia
Sponsor	A recognised Malaysia Digital Hub	A Malaysian citizen aged 21 or older
Founders per application	Up to 2	Up to 3
Family	Not allowed	Spouse, children and some other family members

New Entrepreneur

This is the starting point for most founders. You don't need a company or a track record yet, but you do need a tech product at least at beta stage, a clear plan to incorporate a company in Malaysia within 1 year, and a subscription to a recognised [Malaysia Digital Hub](#), with at least a 1-year hot desk arrangement. Your company will be located at that hub.

The company (employer) listed on your pass will be the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), not your own company.

After 2 years on the New Entrepreneur pass with demonstrated achievement, you can apply for the Established Entrepreneur category.

Established Entrepreneur

This category is for founders who have already built a business. You need a track record of at least 3 years, supported by the latest 2 years of financial records (or 1 year audited). You also need evidence of previous fundraising of at least USD100,000, such as an investment agreement, cap table or investor confirmation letter.

The pass lasts up to 5 years, you can set up your company anywhere in Malaysia, and you can bring your family. In our experience, this pass also makes it easier to open personal bank accounts and get loans, as you're treated as a resident in Malaysia.

Other MTEP tracks

MTEP also has two other 5-year tracks: **Tech Investor** (for founders or partners of a venture capital firm registered with the Securities Commission Malaysia, with minimum funds of RM10 million) and **Senior Management** (for C-suite or head of department candidates in tech or venture capital, with at least 7 years in a management role and an annual base compensation of at least RM180,000). If either of these fits you, check the details with MDEC directly.

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SECTION 4

Bringing Your Family

Only **Established Entrepreneurs** can bring family members. New Entrepreneurs can't.

As an Established Entrepreneur, these family members can apply for a **Residence Pass Dependant**:

- Your husband or wife
- Your children, adopted children or stepchildren under 18
- A disabled child of any age, verified by experts
- Biological children from a common law marriage (different gender) under 18

These family members can be considered for a **Social Visit Pass** (12 months, renewable):

- Your parents and parents-in-law
- Children aged 18 to 25, with a sworn statement each time confirming they're unmarried, unemployed and still dependent
- Biological children from a previous common law relationship under 7
- A common law partner (different gender)

Can my spouse work? Not automatically. A spouse on an MTEP Dependant Pass needs their own work authorisation or Employment Pass to take up a job.

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SECTION 5

What You Need to Apply

Some of these documents take time to arrange, especially the Letter of Good Conduct and the sponsor documents, so start early.

For both categories

- A **business pitch deck**, including a product-market fit analysis and validation with cited sources
- Your **passport**: all pages, cover to cover, with at least 6 empty pages and at least 14 months of validity left
- Your **latest 3 months of personal bank statements**, showing at least RM50,000 every month (more on this below)
- A **Letter of Good Conduct** from an authorised authority in your country of origin or current residence or from your country's embassy in Malaysia
- Your latest **resume**
- A copy of your **highest educational certificate** or a relevant technical certificate

New Entrepreneur only

- A **Letter of Offer** from a recognised Malaysia Digital Hub (or recognised partner) for a 1-year tenancy
- A **Personal Bond** from the sponsoring hub, stamped by the Inland Revenue Board. Chinese and Bangladeshi nationals provide a **Security Bond and Bank Guarantee** instead.

Established Entrepreneur only

- The **Malaysian Sponsor Form**, plus a front and back copy of your sponsor's NRIC
- Your existing company's incorporation documents, showing shareholders and business activities
- The latest certified true copy of your company's audited report or management accounts for the last 2 years
- Evidence of previous fundraising of at least USD100,000

If applicable

- A no objection letter from your current employer, if you're in Malaysia on an Employment Pass
- Letters of support from ecosystem partners, such as accelerators, universities or venture capital firms (New Entrepreneur)
- Intellectual property documents, research collaboration agreements, testimonials, awards or MoUs
- Company incorporation forms and accounts, if you've already set up a company

The RM50,000 bank balance

Every applicant needs a personal bank balance of at least **RM50,000, kept for 3 consecutive months**. It has to be in demand deposits: current, savings or cheque accounts. It doesn't have to be a Malaysian bank. You'll still need a Malaysian business account once you've set up your company, and for some nationalities that takes longer (see [Extra bank checks for some nationalities](#)).

These don't count: shares, bonds, gold, cryptocurrency, fixed deposits or other investments.

An example. Say you have RM35,000 in your savings account and RM40,000 in a fixed deposit. That doesn't meet the requirement, because the fixed deposit doesn't count. If you move RM15,000 or more into your savings account and keep the balance above RM50,000 for 3 full months, your statements for those 3 months will show what MDEC needs to see.

The sponsor

- **New Entrepreneur:** your sponsor must be a recognised Malaysia Digital Hub. The hub completes the sponsorship or personal bond document (with stamp duty), and you subscribe to its services with at least a 1-year hot desk arrangement. You can find recognised hubs on the [MD Hub list](#).

Tip: don't just pick the cheapest option. Visit a few hubs if you can (or do virtual tours) and see which community feels right for you. You'll be spending a lot of time there, and the network you build can be invaluable. Some hubs are more familiar with the MTEP process than others, so ask them about their experience with MTEP applicants.

- **Established Entrepreneur:** your sponsor must be a Malaysian citizen aged 21 or older, who signs a Declaration Form and provides a copy of their NRIC.

The Letter of Good Conduct

This is a certificate or letter confirming you have no criminal or misdemeanour record. It's compulsory for new applicants. If you need it to get the letter from your local authority, MDEC can issue an acknowledgement letter to help.

The pitch deck

Treat it like you're pitching to investors. Except these investors give you a visa, not money. Your pitch deck is where you show the panel that your business is real, that it's built on your own technology, and that you're the right person to build it. Cover the problem and your solution, your product (with screenshots or a demo), the market opportunity, your business model, traction so far, your team, why Malaysia, and your plans for the next 12 to 24 months. You need to include a product-market fit analysis and validation with cited sources, so back up your claims.

Show your technology. In our experience, this is where most applications are won or lost. Give the panel enough to judge how defensible it is:

- A short **architecture overview**: what you built yourself, and what you use from others
- A **demo**, live or recorded, of the product working
- **Evidence of your code or IP**, such as repository access or screenshots, patents or patent filings, or research papers
- Who on your team **built it**, and their technical background

If you rely on AI models, be clear about what you add on top: your own data, training, models or engineering.

Common mistakes we see:

- Decks that are too vague about the actual technology
- No clear explanation of why Malaysia specifically
- Overcomplicating things. Keep it clear and concise

Remember, the panel wants to understand your business in 10 to 15 minutes. If they're confused, that's not a good sign.

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SECTION 6

MTEP Fees

Every applicant pays a **non-refundable application fee of RM540** when they submit. If you're approved, the rest is paid when you submit your passport for the pass to be issued.

FEE	NEW ENTREPRENEUR	ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEUR
Application fee (on submission, per applicant)	RM540	RM540
Processing fee	RM2,160	RM4,860 (principal or spouse)
Processing fee, dependants under 18	Not applicable	RM2,160 each
Processing fee, other dependants (Social Visit Pass)	Not applicable	RM1,080 each per year
Immigration pass fee	RM360	RM500
Multiple entry visa, if your nationality needs one	Varies by country	Varies by country

All fees include 8% SST and are paid to MDEC online.

An example. A solo New Entrepreneur pays RM540 to apply, then RM2,160 plus RM360 after approval. That's RM3,060 in MDEC and pass fees, plus a multiple entry visa if your nationality needs one. Your Malaysia Digital Hub subscription is a separate cost, agreed with the hub.

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SECTION 7

The Application Process

Step 1: Prepare your documents

Get everything in the list above ready, in English. The bank statements need 3 full months, so plan for that.

Step 2: Apply online

You submit everything through the official [MTEP application system](#), and pay the RM540 application fee. You don't need to be in Malaysia to apply, and there's no physical submission for the initial application.

Step 3: Business Analyst and review

Within 3 working days of a complete submission, MDEC assigns you a **Business Analyst**, who'll be your point of contact. MDEC processes the application **within 4 weeks** of the complete submission (including documents and payment). That's subject to the date of the next MTEP Panel Meeting, which depends on the Immigration Department's availability.

If your application passes the initial screening, you may be invited for a call or in-person meeting to defend your pitch and business idea. This isn't just a formality. The panel evaluates your business idea, your capability to execute, and whether you're a good fit for the Malaysian ecosystem.

Step 4: Approval

If the MTEP Approval Committee approves you, you'll receive an **approval letter**. It's valid for **6 months** from the date it's issued and can't be extended, so you need to complete the immigration steps within that time.

My advice: don't book your one-way flight until you have your approval letter in hand. I've seen people stress themselves out trying to time everything perfectly. Give yourself buffer room.

Step 5: Enter Malaysia

You don't need to be in Malaysia to apply, as everything is done online. New applicants and their dependants can also stay in Malaysia while the application is being processed. If you're in Malaysia when you're approved, you'll need to leave the country. If your nationality requires one, get a **Visa with Reference (VDR)** before you re-enter, then continue with the endorsement of your pass.

Step 6: Submit your passport and get your pass

Submit your passport and payment at the **Expats Service Centre**:

- **Address:** 2nd Floor, Prima 8, Block 3508, Jalan Teknokrat 6, Cyber 5, 63000 Cyberjaya, Selangor
- **Hours:** Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 4.30pm (lunch break 1.00pm to 2.00pm Monday to Thursday, 12.00pm to 2.45pm on Friday)

Your pass is processed and ready **within 14 working days**. The Immigration Department issues the pass within about 2 weeks of approval, at its discretion.

What if I'm rejected?

All decisions are final, and there's no formal appeal process. If MTEP doesn't work out, you can look at other work pass routes through [MDEC Expat Services](#).

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SECTION 8

After You Arrive

Setting up your company

Every Sdn Bhd needs at least one director who ordinarily resides in Malaysia (section 196(4) of the Companies Act 2016). That's why, as a foreign founder, you usually get your MTEP pass first and incorporate after. A Malaysian partner isn't required: you can own 100% of your Sdn Bhd.

- **New Entrepreneurs** need to incorporate within 1 year, and the company is located at your Malaysia Digital Hub.
- **Established Entrepreneurs** can set up anywhere in Malaysia.

After incorporation, you'll need to:

1. Appoint a [licensed company secretary](#) (required by law within 30 days of incorporation)
2. Open a corporate bank account for your business
3. Fix your financial year end, and [appoint an auditor and tax agent](#)
4. Set up your [accounting routine](#)
5. Register with the statutory bodies, so you're ready to hire
6. Check whether you need any licences (usually not for tech startups, except a premise licence if you have your own office)

Starting a company comes with responsibilities. We see it all too often. Dreams are big at the start and a company is incorporated, but when things don't work out, the company gets neglected with the excuse "it's not active". Let me be clear: **don't do that**. Staying on top of your annual compliance is simple once you have a few routines in place. Not doing so can result in hefty penalties and can affect your ability to do business in Malaysia in the future.

Our [guide to setting up a Sdn Bhd](#) has the steps, and we can [incorporate your company](#) online. Once it's set up, you'll need a [company secretary](#), a bank account, and accounting and tax in place. Our overview of [taxes for a Sdn Bhd](#) covers the basics.

Banking

Opening a business account, and then a personal account, is often the part that takes the most time. Every bank has its own compliance checks, and for some nationalities it can take longer. We usually start with the business account and then use that relationship for your personal account at the same bank. Not every bank is familiar with the MTEP pass yet. MDEC can issue a letter in support of your bank account opening request.

It would be a shame to apply for your pass, move to Malaysia, incorporate a company and then find out that opening a bank account for your company isn't possible. If you're unsure about your situation, [message us](#) before you apply.

Extra bank checks for some nationalities

Being eligible for MTEP and being able to open a bank account are two separate things. MTEP eligibility is covered in [Who Can Apply?](#). Banks follow their own anti-money laundering rules.

Under Bank Negara Malaysia's AML/CFT rules, banks must apply enhanced due diligence to customers from higher-risk countries. These are countries identified by the FATF or the Government of Malaysia, including countries under sanctions or embargoes. Banks also make their own risk assessment, which includes country risk. So some founders who qualify for MTEP may find that opening a business account takes more work.

Countries that commonly get more scrutiny (as of 13 October 2026):

WHY	COUNTRIES
FATF high-risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action ("black list", June 2026)	Iran and North Korea (countermeasures), Myanmar (enhanced due diligence)
FATF jurisdictions under increased monitoring ("grey list", June 2026)	Angola, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Monaco, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Virgin Islands (UK), Yemen
Countries with UN Security Council sanctions regimes , which Malaysia implements through the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Strategic Trade Act	Afghanistan (Taliban), Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen
Broad US, EU or UK sanctions programmes, which banks with international links often take into account	Russia and Belarus (US, EU and UK), Cuba (US)

UN sanctions mostly target listed people, groups and activities rather than everyone from a country, and US, EU and UK sanctions aren't Malaysian law. But banks factor them into their risk assessment, so you can expect more questions.

The FATF updates its lists after each plenary (February, June and October), so check the [FATF page](#) for the latest version. Banks may also apply extra checks to nationalities that aren't on any of these lists, based on their own risk assessment, for example countries that were on the FATF grey list until recently, such as Pakistan (removed in October 2022) and Nigeria (removed in October 2025).

What to expect:

- **Extra checks** before the bank approves the account, often with senior management sign-off
- **More documents**, such as proof of your source of funds and wealth, a business plan, and a list of your expected clients and suppliers
- **Longer timelines** than the usual account opening
- **A possible rejection**, as each bank decides for itself

Start early, keep your documents in English and up to date, and be ready to explain where your money comes from and how the business will earn. If you'd like help preparing, [message us on WhatsApp](#).

Tax

MTEP pass holders are subject to Malaysian tax law and need to file tax in Malaysia. MTEP itself doesn't give you any tax exemptions, car or house purchase exemptions or similar financial benefits. If you're looking for tax incentives for your tech business, that's what Malaysia Digital (MD) status is for (see below). For paying yourself, see our guide on [director salary vs dividends](#).

Bringing in your team

Once your company is set up, you can apply for Employment Passes for foreign team members through MDEC's Expats Service Centre. There are separate routes for [MD status companies](#) and for non-MD companies.

The Employment Pass categories are based on monthly basic salary. For new and renewal applications from **1 June 2026**:

CATEGORY	MONTHLY BASIC SALARY (FROM 1 JUNE 2026)
Category I	RM20,000 and above
Category II	RM10,000 to RM19,999
Category III	RM5,000 to RM9,999

MTEP and MD status are separate

MTEP is a pass for you as a founder. [Malaysia Digital \(MD\) status](#) is a status for your company. Having one doesn't give you the other, and each has its own application and conditions. A company started by an MTEP pass holder can also apply for MD status, for example once it's ready to grow a team and wants MD tax incentives or foreign knowledge worker passes.

Join the MTEP community. There's an official WhatsApp group for MTEP pass holders where you can connect with other entrepreneurs on the programme, ask questions and share experiences. To join, ask your MDEC contact during your application, or email the MDEC MTEP team after you've been approved. There's good knowledge sharing happening there.

MDEC's ecosystem also offers soft-landing support through its partners and programmes. You can explore them on mdec.my.

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SECTION 9

Renewing Your Pass

When to renew

Renewal submissions open **2 months before your pass expires**. Submit at least **6 weeks before expiry** so there's time for the Immigration Department's process. You need to stay in Malaysia, with a valid pass, throughout the renewal. About 3 months before your pass expires, MDEC sends you a survey, and responding is part of the renewal assessment.

Renewals follow the same processing timeline as new applications.

What you'll need

	NEW ENTREPRENEUR	ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEUR
Business	Pitch deck, plus product or project milestones for the previous and current year, with validation	Latest pitch deck with a 5-year plan, plus milestones for the previous and current year, with validation
Company	Company incorporation forms (eSSM)	Company incorporation forms (eSSM), the latest certified true copy of your audited financial report, and a term sheet or proof of valuation
Team and tax	Not required	Latest month's CP39 (monthly tax deduction) document, and an EPF statement (Form A) or copies of employees' employment contracts
Sponsor	1-year tenancy agreement from a Malaysia Digital Hub, and a personal or security bond with stamp duty endorsed by the Inland Revenue Board	Malaysian Sponsor Form and sponsor NRIC copy

	NEW ENTREPRENEUR	ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEUR
Personal	Passport (all pages, at least 6 empty, 14 months validity) with your current pass, and 3 months of bank statements showing RM50,000	Passport (all pages, at least 6 empty, 14 months validity) with your current pass, 3 months of bank statements showing RM50,000, and health insurance for you and your dependants

What MDEC looks for at renewal

In our experience, the panel wants to see that you've actually been working on your business and making progress. You don't need to be profitable or have raised millions, but you should be able to show:

- You've been actively developing your product or technology
- You're building your company in Malaysia, not just using MTEP as a visa for other purposes
- You have a clear plan for the next 12 months

At the Established Entrepreneur level, expectations are higher. The panel wants to see that your company is operational, contributes to the local economy (ideally by hiring Malaysians), is tax compliant and is sustainable.

Can your renewal be rejected?

Yes. While I haven't seen it happen often, renewals can be rejected if:

- You haven't made meaningful progress on your business
- There are compliance issues (tax or immigration)
- Your business activities no longer match the MTEP criteria
- You've been largely absent from Malaysia

Moving up, or moving on

- **New Entrepreneurs** can renew once, for 1 more year. After 2 years with demonstrated achievement, you can apply for the Established Entrepreneur category, so plan your milestones with that in mind.
- **Established Entrepreneurs** can renew once, for up to 5 more years.
- In both cases, you can also apply for an Employment Pass through your own company to keep running your business in Malaysia.

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SECTION 10

MTEP vs DE Rantau vs MD Status

MDEC runs three programmes that founders often mix up:

	MTEP	DE RANTAU	MD STATUS
For	You, as a founder	You, as a remote worker or freelancer	Your company
What it does	Lets you live in Malaysia and build your own tech startup	Lets you live in Malaysia while working remotely. Freelancers can have local and foreign clients; remote workers must work for a foreign employer.	Unlocks tax incentives and foreign knowledge worker passes for your company
How long	1 year (New) or up to 5 years (Established), each renewable once	3 to 12 months, renewable for up to 12 more	Ongoing, as long as you meet the conditions
Family	Established Entrepreneurs only	Spouse and children, and parents for the main pass holder	Not applicable
What you need to show	RM50,000 in your bank account for 3 months, and a tech product	Income of more than USD24,000 a year (tech) or USD60,000 (non-tech), and an active contract of more than 3 months	A Malaysian company with RM1,000 paid-up capital, and the MD conditions within 12 months
Fees	RM540, plus processing and pass fees after approval	RM1,000 (main), RM500 per dependant	RM1,080

You can apply for DE Rantau on mdec.my/derantau. For MD status, see our [Malaysia Digital \(MD\) status guide](#).

If you want to build your own tech company in Malaysia, MTEP is usually the place to start. A company needs a director who lives in Malaysia, and MTEP gives you a pass before you incorporate. Once your company is running and growing a team, MD status can be the next step.

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SECTION 11

What Changed Recently

WHAT	WHAT CHANGED
Applying from Malaysia	New applicants and dependants can stay in Malaysia while their application is processed, but must exit and re-enter after approval (with a VDR if needed).
Nationality and AI	Open to all nationalities except Israel. AI ventures are a priority.
Documents (2026)	Passports need at least 14 months of validity and 6 empty pages. Established Entrepreneurs need evidence of previous fundraising of at least USD100,000. Bank balances must be in demand deposits.
Renewal timing	Renewal submissions open 2 months before expiry; submit at least 6 weeks before.
Employment Pass salaries (1 June 2026)	New minimum salaries for team members you hire: Category I RM20,000+, Category II RM10,000 to RM19,999, Category III RM5,000 to RM9,999.

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SECTION 12

Is MTEP Right for You?

MTEP is likely a good fit if you:

- Are a foreign founder building your own technology in one of the targeted sectors
- Have technology that's hard to copy, and a technical founder or team who built it
- Have a product at least at beta stage (or MVP, as an Established Entrepreneur)
- Can show RM50,000 in your personal bank account for 3 months
- Want to live in Malaysia and build your company here

It might not be the right route if you:

- Mostly resell, integrate, consult or provide services around technology

- Have a product that's mainly a wrapper around an AI API, a white-label app or a no-code build
- Work remotely for clients or a foreign employer and don't plan to build your own company (look at DE Rantau)
- Already have a Malaysian company and want to be employed by it (look at the Employment Pass, possibly through [MD status](#))
- Need to bring your family in your first year and don't qualify as an Established Entrepreneur

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SECTION 13

Get Started

We're founders too, and we've been through MTEP ourselves. We can help you:

- Work out whether MTEP, DE Rantau or MD status fits your plans
- Prepare for your application
- [Incorporate your Sdn Bhd](#) once you have your pass
- Keep your company compliant with our [company secretary](#), [accounting](#) and [tax](#) services
- Run [payroll](#) when you hire your first team members

You look forward. We handle the rest. Have a question? [Message us on WhatsApp](#) and we'll get back to you.

Sources: MDEC's MTEP FAQ and 2026 submission checklists, and [mdec.my](#), checked on 13 October 2026. Rules change, so check [mdec.my/mtep](#) before you apply. This is general information, not legal, immigration or tax advice.

Need a Sdn Bhd for MTEP?

Once your MTEP application is approved, you set up your company in Malaysia. We register it and handle the company secretary work after that.



RM1,599

including RM1,010 SSM fees, excl. SST



3 to 5 working days

to incorporate, signed digitally



Licensed company secretary

appointed from day one



WhatsApp support

talk to our team directly



Chat on WhatsApp

Incorporate with us →



Scan to chat on WhatsApp

foundingbird.com/wa



1,000+ companies set up