

Malaysia

Women, Business and the Law 2024 (WBL2024) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Kuala Lumpur). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Malaysia scores 60.6 out of 100.0**. The overall score for Malaysia is lower than the regional average observed across East Asia and the Pacific (73.0). Within the East Asia and the Pacific region, the maximum score observed is 91.9 (Hong Kong SAR, China).

Malaysia - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2024



Relative Strengths

Malaysia does not attain a perfect score on any of the WBL2024 indicators. There is room for improvement across all eight indicators.

Areas for Improvement

When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, constraints related to marriage, laws affecting women's work after having children, constraints on women starting and running a business, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, Malaysia could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Malaysia is on the indicator measuring constraints related to marriage (the WBL2024 Marriage indicator). To improve on the Marriage indicator, Malaysia may wish to consider no longer requiring a married woman to obey her husband, allowing women to obtain a divorce in the same way as men, and giving women the same rights to remarry as men.

Recent Reforms

During the past year (October 2nd, 2022 to October 1st, 2023), Malaysia removed restrictions on a woman's employment in industrial jobs. Malaysia increased paid maternity leave from 60 days to 98 days, introduced seven days of paid paternity leave, and prohibited the dismissal of pregnant workers.



Further data details for Malaysia are available at:
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/malaysia/2024>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	No	Islamic Family Law Act (Federal Territories Act), Art. 59(2)(c)
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	No	Islamic Family Law Act (Federal Territories Act), Art. 59(2)(b)
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Passport application procedures; Passport application form
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	Islamic Family Law Act (Federal Territories Act), Art. 59(2)(b)
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Employment Act 1955, Secs. 2 and Part XVA, Secs. 81A-81H, Employment (Amendment) Act 2022, Secs. 34 and 36
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	No	<i>Criminal:</i> No applicable provisions could be located <i>Civil:</i> No applicable provisions could be located
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Marriage	Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband?	No	Islamic Family Law Act (Federal Territories Act), Art. 129
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Domestic Violence Act 1994; Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2017
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	No	Islamic Family Law Act (Federal Territories Act), Arts. 47-52
	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	No	Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories Act), Arts. 47(16) and 47(17)
Parenthood	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	Yes	Employment Act 1955, Sec. 37(1)(a); Employment (Amendment) Act 2022, Sec. 12
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	Employment Act 1955, Sec. 37(2)
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	Yes	Employment Act of 1955, Sec. 60FA; Employment (Amendment) Act 2022, Sec. 23
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Employment Act 1955, Sec. 41A; Employment (Amendment) Act 2022, Sec. 13
Entrepreneurship	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Assets	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories Act), Art. 52 h(iv)
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	No	Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Art. 3; Distribution Act, Art. 2
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	No	Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Art. 3; Distribution Act, Art. 2
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories Act), Art. 52 h(iv)
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories Act), Art. 58(4)(a)
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012, Art. 4(1)
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	Employees Provident Fund Act 1991, Art. 54(6)(a)
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	No	No applicable provisions could be located