

The Process of a Name Change in Asia Pacific Countries

A list on the process of changing your name in various countries all over Asia Pacific.

A name change is a procedure whereby someone changes their legal name on official documentation. This can be for many reasons – religious, marriage, personal etc. For trans people however, a name change is usually the next best thing if legal gender recognition (resource for legal gender recognition [here](#)) is not possible in your country, here are the steps on how you can do it in your country:

Note: *To complete this article, we require a collective contribution. If you know the process of a name change on your country, please email hello@beingtrans.com with the subject “CONTRIBUTOR: Name Change Process in [COUNTRYNAME]” and add your information to the email. We will reply to verify your information.*

Malaysia

The process of changing your name as a transgender person in Malaysia is complicated. This is mainly due to a few factors:

-Malaysia is a multiracial and multiethnic country; different requirements and naming conventions depending on the race stated on your identity card.

-Malaysia is considered secular but Islam is considered the “religion of the Federation”; in reality, the religion of Islam intertwines heavily with the legislative process by way of fatwas. A fatwa is actually just a religious opinion but here, after going through approval, it can carry with it the force of the law. This means that anything related to the religion will be heavily scrutinised and that includes a name change.

-Being transgender isn't recognized; as of writing this article, being transgender is still unrecognized in Malaysia and this means that if you state in truth that you want to change your name because you are transgender, you will not be able to do so; instead, there needs to be a different reason listed such as a change of religion or simply because you want to (more difficult).. Which is to say if you are Muslim, this is unfortunately going to be more difficult for you.

Here are the steps to officially change your name in Malaysia with clauses for transgender people.

1) You will need to proceed to a National Registrar Department (NRD) counter also known as a Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara (JPN) in Malay

2) You will need to bring with you some required documentations (Original and Copies)

- Your identity card
- Your passport(if any)
- Your birth certificate(or adoption certificate, or citizenship certificate or confirmation of citizenship status or entry permit)
- Statutory declaration

This is a legal document stating that whatever you have brought or reasons for doing so listed are true. You will need to sign it in the presence of a Commissioner of Oaths and have them stamp it. If you are under 18, the statutory declaration must be made by your parent or guardian (grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, elder sister or brother who is over 21)

- Application Form [JPN.KP16](#) (obtainable from the counter)
- Verification of address – to submit the electricity bill/ water bill / sewerage bill / utility bill /Property assessment tax/ assessment tax / income tax's assessment form / sale and purchase agreement / tenancy agreement / supporting document from Headman / Village Head / Tuai Rumah (Longhouse Head) / ADUN (State Legislative Assembly Members) / MP (Member of Parliament) / Employer / Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) or other equivalent documents. (ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED COPY).
- Other supporting documents.

If you are changing your name based on religious reasons:

- Conversion to Christianity – provide a baptism certificate. This is useful to add a feminine english name to your existing one, but on a case by case basis, this might be rejected. An ambiguous name might get more easily approved.
- Conversion out of Christianity – provide a certification that the applicant is Buddhist/Hindu/Sikh. This is useful for removing a gendered English name.

If you are Muslim, even though it is listed that you can submit an application to convert to another religion, it is highly unlikely that the process will be successful. In fact in some states, it is considered heresy and is illegal to do so. Similarly, converting to Muslim will not be helpful as a transgender person due to Syariah law(which has laws against being transgender).

If you are Hindu or Muslim, there is another point to consider which is to remove the “son of” or “daughter of” designation in your name.

- If you are Hindu, the process is exactly the same as listed with the reason for removing it mentioned in the JPN/KP16 application form.
- If you are Muslim, the process is exactly the same as listed with the reason for removing it mentioned in the JPN/KP16 application form with some things to consider:
 - Children who are born outside of a marriage (including being born before your parents are married) will not be allowed to be designated as children to their biological father. Children in this scenario are required to put “bin/binti Abdullah” into their name, but to avoid unnecessary gossip, you are allowed to put your father’s name without adding bin/binti. In other words, doing so might give people the impression that you were born out of wedlock
 - The importance of Islamic lineage or for inheritance purposes. Though this can be proven with a birth certificate

3) You are required to pay a fee of RM10 per submission. The process takes about 3 – 6 months, in which time you will know if you have been successful or it has been rejected.

Read More:

[Legal Gender Recognition: A Multi-Country Legal and Policy Review in Asia](#) – Asia Pacific

Transgender Network

[Trans Legal Mapping Report](#) – ILGA World

References:

[Application For Amendment Of Identity Card Particulars](#) – jpn.gov.my

[Here's how you can legally change your name in Malaysia](#) – asklegal.my

[Can you choose not to have bin or binti on your MyKad?](#) – asklegal.my