

# Tourist guide course in UMS

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Local tourist guides who are keen to improve their guiding and communications skills are encouraged to sign up for the 'Hands on Tourist Guiding' and the 'Train the Trainer' course that will be held here.

The two-week course which will be held in UMS here from April 6 is jointly organised by the World Federation of Tourist Guides Association (WFTGA), Sabah Tourist Guides Association (STGA) and UMS.

According to WFTGA Exco Roger Rajah, the course fee is 850 Euros per person but local participants may either be subsidized or sponsored by the Tourism and Culture Ministry.

Speaking to reporters at the STGA organised program in KK Wetlands in conjunction with the World International Tourist Guide Day celebration yesterday, Roger said that this is the first course which will be conducted by the partnership between STGA, WFTGA and UMS.

Sabah, he said is also the second WFTGA training centre, the first being in Cyprus.

"The first course that we are doing in partnership with STGA, WFTGA and UMS will commence on April 6 and it is the Hands on Tourist Guiding and the Train the Trainer course.

"The Hands on part will be about the technique of guiding and we will teach them about improving their guiding skills and communication skills. So far we have about six foreigners who have applied and we are now waiting for the locals to apply because the Tourism Ministry has given WFTGA a letter to say that it is considering to either sponsor or subsidize local tourist guides to participate in the course.

"That is why we are encouraging local tourist guides to register for the two week course so STGA can write in to the Tourism Ministry to apply for the assistance. This is not only open to STGA members as we want to involve all tourist guides in Malaysia," he said.

Roger added that the closing date for application is March 17 and the participants who qualify as trainers, will be certified as National Trainer and can train tourist guides all over the country.

There is also the option to upgrade to an International Trainer but the course is held in Cyprus, he said adding that at the moment, he is the only International Trainer from Malaysia.

Those interested can apply through [www.wftga.org](http://www.wftga.org), go to the training link, click on the Sabah brochure, fill in the form there and submit it he said.

Roger said that they want as many local guides as possible to apply the soonest so that they can apply for the assistance from the Tourism Ministry. WFTGA, Roger said, represents 80 member countries and about 200,000 tourist guides worldwide.

Its aim is to standardize training for tourist guides all over the world, Roger said, adding that he did his training in Cyprus and found out that it was very expensive for Asians to go.

"Once STGA joined WFTGA, I suggested that the training be held in Sabah, we spoke to UMS and they agreed to be our partner. In October we mooted the whole thing and the then WFTGA President Rosalind Newlands came to Sabah to discuss the matter with UMS and the state Tourism Ministry.

"In January last year during the WFTGA convention in Macau the MoA was signed between WFTGA, UMS and STGA to create the second international training centre in the world after Cyprus which will be located in Sabah.

"Now Asians do not have to go to Cyprus for the course. We encourage tourist guides to join the course so that they can enhance their skills and go as far professionally as possible," he said.