



International Eminent Honours Ethical Business Recognition Programme

Advancing ESG, Corporate Integrity & Governance Excellence

1. Background & Strategic Context

The Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI), established in 1837, has a long-standing commitment to promoting ethical business conduct, governance, and integrity. With deep international roots, MICCI has consistently championed high standards of corporate behaviour as a foundation for sustainable economic growth.

In 2015, MICCI introduced the National Corporate Ethics Award (NCEA) as a private sector-led initiative to recognise organisations demonstrating exemplary ethical standards. Building on this legacy, MICCI now reintroduces the programme under the **International Eminent Honours – Ethical Business Recognition**, aligning it with evolving ESG expectations, Section 17A corporate liability requirements, and Bursa Malaysia's governance framework.

Promoting a Culture of Integrity



2. Programme Objectives

The Ethical Business Recognition Programme aims to:



Promote strong governance and ethical leadership as core ESG enablers



Encourage corporate compliance with Section 17A of the MACC Act, including adequate procedures to prevent bribery



Reinforce Bursa Malaysia's principles on board accountability, risk management, and internal controls



Recognise organisations that embed integrity, transparency, and sustainability into business strategy and operations



Strengthen stakeholder confidence across investors, regulators, employees, and communities

RECOGNITION TITLE

3. Recognition Title

International

Eminent

Honours

Ethical Business

Recognition

Programme



4. ESG Aligned Scope & Eligibility

The programme is open to all Malaysian-incorporated organisations, including listed companies, SMEs, and associations.

Recognition categories:

Large Enterprises

SMEs & Associations

Advocates of the Year

Industry coverage includes **Financial Services, Manufacturing, Trading & Services, Property, Oil & Gas, Technology & Innovation, and Agro/Aqua** reflecting sectors subject to increasing ESG disclosure, governance scrutiny, and anti-corruption compliance.



5. Governance & Ethics Assessment Framework

VIGOUR – ESG Mapped

Assessment is conducted holistically using MICCI's VIGOUR framework, mapped to ESG, Section 17A, and Bursa governance principles:



Value Creation (E & G)

Ethical leadership, ESG-driven strategy, business ethics policies, and tone from the top.



Governance (G)

Board and management oversight, ethics and governance training, internal controls, risk management, and stakeholder communication aligned with Bursa Malaysia expectations.



Understanding (S & G)

Fair employment practices, diversity and inclusion, employee development, and responsible human capital management.



Integrity (G)

Code of conduct, anti-bribery controls, procurement integrity, conflict-of-interest management, and Section 17A compliance mechanisms.



Obligation (G)

Legal and regulatory compliance, whistleblowing frameworks, non-retaliation policies, and monitoring of ethical performance targets.



Responsibility (E & S)

Corporate social responsibility, community impact, environmental stewardship, and sustainable business practices.

Assessments involve structured documentation review, evidence-based evaluation, peer benchmarking, and site audits conducted by confidential assessors with participation from international chambers to ensure balance and credibility.

6. Recognition Philosophy & Compliance Positioning

The programme recognises **demonstrated commitment and continuous improvement**, not certification. Past regulatory or legal challenges do not automatically disqualify applicants. Instead, emphasis is placed on:



The adequacy of preventive and remedial measures

Organisational readiness to manage ethical risks

Alignment with Section 17A "adequate procedures" expectations and evolving ESG governance standards

This approach supports **practical governance maturity** rather than punitive exclusion.



INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT

Institutional Alignment & Credibility

The Ethical Business Recognition Programme derives its credibility from its institutional alignment with Malaysia's national governance, anti-corruption, and ESG frameworks. This alignment ensures the programme is not symbolic, but anchored in existing regulatory expectations, public policy priorities, and capital market standards.

Alignment with Malaysia's Anti-Corruption Agenda

Section 17A – MACC Act

Malaysia's anti-corruption framework, particularly Section 17A of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act, places corporate liability on organisations for bribery committed by associated persons unless adequate procedures are in place.

The programme reinforces this agenda by:

- Assessing the existence, implementation, and effectiveness of anti-bribery and anti-corruption policies

- Evaluating governance structures that support risk-based controls, whistleblowing mechanisms, and non-retaliation policies

- Recognising organisations that demonstrate proactive compliance, ethical leadership, and continuous improvement rather than mere policy adoption

This positioning supports national efforts to shift corporate behaviour from **reactive compliance to preventive governance culture.**



Alignment with National Integrity & Governance Institutions

The programme aligns with the broader objectives of Malaysia's integrity and governance ecosystem, including institutions responsible for:

Promoting integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct across public and private sectors

Encouraging cross-sector collaboration in strengthening governance awareness and ethical business practices

Supporting collective action initiatives that elevate market-wide ethical standards

By aligning with these institutional objectives, the programme serves as a **private-sector reinforcement mechanism to national governance efforts**, without duplicating or replacing regulatory enforcement.

Alignment with ESG Priorities

Environmental, Social & Governance

Globally and domestically, ESG has become a core lens through which corporate performance and risk are evaluated. In Malaysia, ESG expectations are increasingly embedded within policy, investment decisions, and corporate disclosures.

The programme aligns with ESG priorities by:



Foundational ESG Enablers

Treating governance and integrity as foundational ESG enablers, rather than standalone compliance items



Integrated Assessment

Integrating social responsibility, human capital practices, and stakeholder engagement into the assessment framework



Strategic Embedding

Recognising organisations that embed ESG considerations into strategy, operations, and decision-making, not just reporting

This alignment ensures the recognition remains relevant to investors, regulators, and stakeholders seeking credible ESG signals beyond marketing claims.

Alignment with Bursa Malaysia & Capital Market Governance Expectations

Bursa Malaysia places strong emphasis on:

- Board accountability and oversight
- Risk management and internal control frameworks
- Ethical conduct, transparency, and stakeholder protection

For listed companies, the programme acts as a **value-add governance signal**, supporting investor confidence and market trust.

The programme complements Bursa Malaysia's governance expectations by:



Reinforcing MCGG-aligned practices such as board-led ethics oversight and enterprise risk management



Encouraging ethical culture as part of long-term value creation and sustainability



Providing a credible platform for companies to demonstrate governance maturity beyond minimum listing requirements



Independent, Balanced & Peer-Reviewed Assessment

Credibility is further reinforced through:



Independent Assessment

Independent and confidential assessors drawn from experienced practitioners



Peer-Based Evaluation

Peer-based evaluation with international chamber participation, ensuring balanced judgment and benchmarking



Evidence-Based Assessment

Evidence-based assessment, including documentation review and site audits

This approach ensures the programme is **objective, professional, and insulated from promotional bias**, strengthening its standing with regulators, investors, and institutional partners.

Credibility Through Purpose, Not Enforcement

Importantly, the programme does not position itself as a regulator or certifier. Instead, it:

- Supports national governance objectives through recognition and market signalling
- Encourages voluntary adoption of higher ethical and ESG standards
- Creates positive incentives for organisations to go beyond baseline compliance

This reinforces credibility by aligning with public institutions without overstepping regulatory roles.



POSITIONING

Positioning A Credible ESG & Governance Recognition Platform

The programme's institutional alignment ensures it functions as a credible ESG and governance recognition platform, reinforcing Malaysia's anti-corruption framework, national integrity agenda, and capital market governance expectations while supporting sustainable private-sector leadership.



8. Summary

Strengthening Trust, Investor Confidence & Long-Term Sustainability

The **International Eminent Honours – Ethical Business Recognition Programme** serves as a credible ESG and governance benchmark for Malaysian organisations. It recognises businesses that lead with integrity, comply with Section 17A obligations, and align with Bursa Malaysia's governance principles—strengthening trust, investor confidence, and long-term sustainability in the private sector.

