

10/02/1999

Environmental award open to all industries

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THE private sector-initiated environmental award for business and industry in Malaysia, the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award 1998/1999, will this year be open to all industries for participation. Since it launching in 1996, the award was limited to certain sectors only.

Business Council for Sustainable Development in Malaysia (BCSDM) president Datuk Kok Wee Kiat said the move is aimed at getting more participation as response to the award had been slow in the previous years.

"Previously, only few industries were selected to vie for the award but there were too few applications," he said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday at a briefing on the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award 1998/1999.

The award is jointly organised by the BSCDM, Environmental Management and Research Association of Malaysia, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers and Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is supported by the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry.

When it was launched in 1996, the focus was on the textile, food and beverages, pulp and paper industries and hotels and resorts. In 1997, it was restricted to chemical, petroleum, electrical and electronic sectors only.

The Hibiscus Award's Technical Team head Marina Yong said small-and medium-sized industries (SMIs) had shied away the last two years.

"By opening up the field, it will attract more industries to take part other than to make them more environmentally-conscious," she said.

The award was previously known as the "Hibiscus Award". It was later upgraded to the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award after it was approved by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in June 1998.

The award recognises participating organisations that meet the assessment standards set by the organising committee.

Apart from that, it is also used to assess a company's overall commitment to reduce the impact of its operations on the environment. The assessment is carried out in two stages. The first stage involves the submission of a written questionnaire by the participating company while the second stage consists of a site visit to obtain a first-hand understanding of the implementation of the company's environmental management.

There are three categories under the award - the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award for Notable Achievement in Environmental Performance, the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award for Exceptional Achievement in Environmental Performance and the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award for Excellent Achievement in Environmental Performance.

Winners will be awarded a plaque and certificate of participation, eligibility to use the award's logo for publicity purposes, recognition as an exemplary organisation and a 20 per cent discount for course fees for one environmental protection programme from each of the organisers.

In addition, there is also an Annual Challenge Trophy which will be awarded to the participating company with the highest performance for the year.

The award presentation ceremony will be held in November 1999.

Participating companies will be placed under the large enterprise or the small and medium-scale industry categories.

Those under the large enterprise category must have more than 150 full-time employees and an annual turnover exceeding RM25 million. While those under the SMI category are companies with less than 150 employees and an annual sales turnover not exceeding RM25 million. Participating fee is RM1,500 for large enterprises and RM300 for SMIs. In 1996, Motorola Sungei Way was awarded the challenge trophy while Nestle Foods Sdn Bhd in Shah Alam and Shangri-la's Rasa Sayang in Penang jointly won the 1997 award.

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