

Media Monitoring

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Headline: **Itizam Catalyst 2022 propels 21 SMEs to greater heights, supports digital economy**
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The Malaysian Reserve JOIN THE REAL CONVERSATION

Monday, July 31st, 2023

Itizam Catalyst 2022 propels 21 SMEs to greater heights, supports digital economy



Friday, July 28th, 2023 at [Economy](#) | [News](#)

by **NURUL SUHAIDI** / pic **HUSSEIN SHAHARUDDIN**

ILTIZAM Catalyst, an entrepreneurship mentorship initiative under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of Ekuiti Nasional Bhd (Ekuinas) has concluded its first round today.

A total of 21 local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have completed their six-month hands-on training and propelled their businesses to greater heights.

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Ekuitas CEO Syed Yasir Arafat Syed Abd Kadir (*picture*) said most participating SMEs have overcome their business challenges and achieved key performance indicators (KPIs) related to the modules provided, showcasing unwavering determination to steer their business further.

"We congratulate them on the excellent strides they have made and hope that Iltizam Catalyst has provided with them an avenue to explore their strengths and hone their business potential," he said at the Iltizam Catalyst 2022 Achievement Ceremony today.

Throughout the six months, the SMEs have gone through intensive training with industry experts and consultants who provided tailored solutions based on their needs and challenges.

Encompassing all business areas, the critical areas accessed during the training included financial and compliance; digital branding and marketing; and digital and technology adoption to leadership.

Syed Yasir Arafat added that the programme also serves to holistically support the growth potential of SMEs and catalyse them for the digital economy in the highly digital era which demands SMEs be innovative, agile and ahead of the curve.

"With the necessary industry support and guidance, a thriving ecosystem can be further built to ensure Malaysia's entrepreneurs can continue to prosper.

"SMEs are key drivers of the economy, making up 98.5% of all businesses," he added.

For the next round of Iltizam Catalyst, Equitas is targeting to scale and attract the participation of 30 SMEs. Application is open until August 2023.

"Since this is the first batch, we also plan to create an alumni community that will allow them to network and subsequently grow, where they can exchange ideas with each other. That is our aspiration," Syed Yasir Arafat said.

Among the SMEs that graduated from the programme were Abdel Sdn Bhd; FF Studios Sdn Bhd; Pearl Design Centre; Ordinary Bakers; Hasny Furniture; and SMA Dental, among others.

Khalidza Resources Bhd, a homegrown Malay traditional clothing business, said the brick-and-mortar retail business landscape has changed and businesses must adapt to different kinds of branding and online presence.

"We came to realise that we have come to a plateau. So, we needed a boost, assistance and support to move upwards," CFO Katrina Ahmad Khairudin told *The Malaysian Reserve (TMR)*.

She added that joining the programme has helped the company to access the network and funding, obtain appropriate mentorships, and receive guidance to leverage the business, while considering the financial and cost aspects.

She added that the programme has given a clear direction and she looked forward to implementing the comprehensive feedback gained throughout, while improving different pillars of the business.

Another community-driven business, Michi Global Sdn Bhd, which offers Japanese language learning and travel experiences known as "Cakap Jepun", stated that the programme has helped enhance its leadership skills, provided a roadmap and assisted in overcoming challenges, particularly in adapting to technological advancements after being in the market for seven years.

Michi Global MD Haris Ghazali said the programme has left his team with a valuable business circle and network, which has a similar level of understanding in business and allowed them to learn and exchange ideas and expertise irrespective of the business nature.

Applications for Iltizam Catalyst 2023 are open until Aug 12, 2023.