



CISA awards

CISA annually recognises excellence in compliance through the following awards:

- Compliance Officer of the Year
- AML Inkanyezi award
- Compliance Officer to Watch
- Innovative Compliance Team of the Year

This document details the eligibility criteria for each award category, as well as the evidence requirements other important information.

CISA reserves the right to not award any of these categories.

A) Compliance Officer of the Year

The Compliance Officer of the Year award is CISA's highest professional honour and recognises senior compliance leaders whose sustained strategic leadership and measurable impact represent a benchmark of excellence within the profession.

Eligibility Criteria

Area	Detail
CISA membership	Be a member in good standing
Career stage	Minimum 10 – 15 years in compliance, 5 in senior leadership
Role	CCO / Company or Regional Head of Compliance function / senior consultant, must have organisation-wide scope or multiple business units / jurisdictions
Professional standing	Proven track record and no personal adverse regulatory findings; holding a CISA designation is advantageous
Organisational endorsement	Nomination ratified by direct line manager (employer) or client

Evidence Requirements

Each nominee should submit:

1. Executive Summary (maximum 1,000 words)

A concise overview of the nominee's professional journey and leadership approach, covering:

- Career context (key roles and experience in compliance)
- Current role scope (size and complexity of responsibilities)
- Strategic philosophy (how the nominee approaches compliance leadership)



2. Two Case Studies

Apart from a full list of achievements, two short case studies illustrating the nominee's impact in practice. Each case study must include:

- A major compliance challenge or risk faced
- The actions taken by the nominee
- The measurable outcomes achieved

(Each case study should clearly demonstrate the nominee's personal contribution, not only team or organisational achievements.)

3. Impact Metrics

Objective evidence supporting the case studies, such as:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Dashboards or management reports
- Audit or regulatory outcomes
- Documented risk reductions or improvements

(Metrics may be quantitative or qualitative but must demonstrate real organisational impact.)

4. Independent Endorsement

A written endorsement from one of the following:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Board member
- Regulator
- CEO or exco member of major Client

The endorsement should confirm:

- The nominee's role and contribution
- The credibility of the impact described
- The nominee's professional standing and integrity

Prize framework

Prize	Detail
Complimentary CISA Membership	One (1) year free CISA membership, includes all standard member benefits and privileges
Lead CISA Ambassador Appointment	Formal appointment as CISA Lead Ambassador for the year and represent CISA at selected professional events, forums and engagements
Flagship Event Privileges	Complimentary attendance at following year's CISA Annual Conference and Annual awards



Strategic Professional Benefits	Featured long-form profile on CISA website, CISA LinkedIn and newsletter. Optional recorded interview or keynote clip
Symbolic & Formal Recognition	Certificate and trophy presented at gala dinner

- Winner will be required to mentor the winner of the Compliance Officer to Watch awardee

Scoring rubric

Score	Strategic Compliance Leadership - 25%	Measurable Business Impact - 25%	Innovation & Modernisation - 20%	Ethical Culture & Influence - 15%	Industry Contribution & Thought Leadership - 15%
1	Operates effectively within own function, limited strategic influence.	Limited or anecdotal impact.	Maintains traditional compliance approaches.	Meets basic ethical expectations.	Limited external engagement.
2	Provides sound leadership within compliance team.	Some measurable improvements in compliance outcomes.	Introduced incremental improvements.	Promotes ethical conduct within own team.	Participates in professional forums.
3	Influences executive decision-making on compliance matters with reference to GACP.	Clear documented improvements in risk, controls or regulatory performance.	Implemented modern tools or methods.	Actively influences ethical behaviour across organisation.	Contributes to industry discussions and events.
4	Shapes organisational strategy and governance through compliance leadership aligned with GACP.	Significant, multi-year impact across multiple business areas.	Drove significant innovation in systems or frameworks.	Drives strong ethical culture at leadership level.	Influences professional standards or policy.
5	Recognised strategic authority influencing organisational direction at board level using GACP as the core framework.	Transformational impact with sustained, enterprise-wide benefits.	Pioneered new approaches influencing broader professional practice.	Seen as ethical role model shaping organisational values.	Recognised thought leader shaping the profession.

B) AML Inkanyezi award

The AML Inkanyezi Award is an exceptional professional honour recognising individuals whose sustained leadership, integrity and influence have materially strengthened the AML and financial crime compliance ecosystem across Southern Africa.

Unlike the other CISA awards, which recognise individual or organisational achievements within specific roles, the AML Inkanyezi Award focuses on system-level impact. It acknowledges individuals whose leadership, influence and professional integrity have advanced the effectiveness of the AML and financial crime compliance environment across institutions, sectors or jurisdictions.

The award therefore recognises legacy contribution rather than role performance, honouring individuals whose work has materially strengthened the broader compliance ecosystem.

Eligibility Criteria

Area	Detail
Nomination	Nominations may be submitted by regulators or senior industry peers (e.g. CISA Fellows, past winners, CEOs, board members, Heads of Compliance). Self-nominations not permitted
Career stage	No restriction: nominee must demonstrate sustained multi-year contribution
Scope	Systemic AML / compliance ecosystem impact

Practical Nomination Format

Each nominator should submit a concise nomination using the following structure.

1. Nomination Statement (maximum 1,000 words)

A written motivation outlining:

- The nature of the individual's contribution
- The period and scope of their impact
- Why the nominee is regarded as exceptional within the AML and financial crime compliance ecosystem

The nomination should focus on system-level contribution rather than individual project achievements.

2. Supporting Context (Optional)

Nominators may include brief references to relevant contributions such as:

- Regulatory, policy or industry frameworks influenced by the nominee
- Sector initiatives or professional programmes led by the nominee
- Public or industry leadership roles

Formal evidence packs are not required, recognising that many contributions occur at policy or ecosystem level.

3. Declaration

The nominator must provide a declaration confirming that:

- The nomination is made in good faith
- The nominee is regarded as a person of strong professional integrity
- There are no known disciplinary or regulatory concerns affecting the nominee's professional standing to the best of the nominator's knowledge

Scoring Model

Given the nature of the award as an exceptional professional honour, the AML Inkanyezi Award will not use a numerical scoring model.

Instead, judges will assess nominees holistically across a number of core domains to determine whether the nominee meets the standard of exceptional professional contribution.

Judges will indicate whether each nominee:

- Meets the exceptional standard
- Partially meets the standard
- Does not meet the standard

1. Systemic Impact (Non-Negotiable)

Core question:

Would the AML / compliance ecosystem be materially weaker without this person's contribution?

Examples may include influence on regulatory frameworks, sector reforms, national initiatives or cross-industry programmes.

2. Integrity & Professional Standing

Judges assess the nominee's reputation across stakeholders, including their ethical independence, professional credibility and the level of trust placed in them within the compliance ecosystem.

3. Influence on Policy & Practice

Judges consider whether the nominee has shaped regulatory or industry approaches, influenced professional standards or materially advanced best practice in AML or financial crime compliance.

4. Sustainability of Contribution

Judges assess whether the nominee’s impact reflects sustained contribution over multiple years and whether the influence extends beyond isolated initiatives.

5. Legacy & Role Modelling

Judges consider the nominee’s broader professional influence, including mentorship, institution-building and the extent to which the individual inspires and strengthens the profession.

Prize framework

Prize	Detail
Formal Honour Award	Bespoke trophy
Lifetime Honour Roll (optional)	Permanent listing on “AML Inkanyezi Honour Roll” page on the CISA website.
Thought Leadership Platform	Featured tribute article or interview published by CISA. Option to deliver annual keynote, masterclass or fireside discussion (by invitation).

C) Compliance Officer to Watch

The Compliance Officer to Watch award recognises rising stars in the compliance profession who, early in their careers, are already making meaningful contributions, demonstrating initiative, and showing strong potential to become future leaders in compliance.

Eligibility Criteria

Area	Detail
CISA membership	Be a member in good standing
Career stage	3–5 years in compliance
Role level	Specialist, advisor, manager, analyst, consultant, compliance officer
Professional development	Must be pursuing or holding a CISA designation
Organisational endorsement	Nomination supported by line manager or HoC/CEO
Ethical standing	No disciplinary or personal regulatory findings

Evidence Requirements

1. Personal Statement (maximum 500 words)

A short reflective statement outlining the nominee’s early professional journey and motivation, covering:

- Why they chose compliance as a career
- What they have learned so far in their role or roles
- One achievement they are particularly proud of and why

The statement should focus on personal development, mindset and learning, rather than seniority or job titles.

2. One Short Case Example

Apart from a full list of achievements, a brief practical example illustrating the nominee’s contribution in the workplace, describing:

- A task, project or compliance issue they were involved in
- The nominee’s specific role and responsibilities
- What changed or improved as a result of their involvement

The case example should demonstrate initiative, problem-solving and early impact, even if the project was small in scale.



3. Endorsement by Supervisor

A written endorsement from the nominee's line manager, Head of Compliance or equivalent, confirming:

- The nominee's early impact and contribution
- Their professional attitude and reliability
- Their potential for future leadership in the profession

The endorsement should be based on direct observation of performance and not generic character references.

Guidance Note

Submissions for this category are not expected to demonstrate senior leadership or large-scale impact. Judges will assess nominees relative to their career stage and role, with emphasis on potential, learning and early contribution rather than formal authority or organisational scale.

Prize framework

Prize	Detail
Membership prize	Complimentary CISA Membership for one (1) year
Mentorship Programme Access	Priority access to CISA mentorship programme being paired with the Compliance Officer of the year winner
Learning & Qualification Support	50% discount on first CISA designation application, or if already designated, equivalent discount to a CISA programme of their choice
Future Leaders Profile	Speaker on the Young Professionals Open Day, featuring on CISA website and social channels
Symbolic and Formal Award	Certificate presented at awards ceremony

Scoring rubric

Score	Early-Career Impact – 30%	Initiative & Ownership – 25%	Learning Mindset & Growth – 20%	Professional Attitude & Values – 15%	Engagement with the Profession – 10%
1	Performs assigned tasks competently.	Waits for instructions.	Basic compliance knowledge.	Meets basic professional expectations.	Limited professional engagement.
2	Makes small improvements within own role.	Occasionally volunteers for additional tasks.	Shows interest in learning.	Reliable and trustworthy.	Attends some CISA events or training.
3	Delivers clear positive outcomes in projects or processes.	Regularly takes ownership of work and follows through.	Actively pursuing relevant training or qualifications.	Demonstrates sound judgement and ethics.	Actively participates in professional activities.
4	Creates visible improvements recognised by supervisors.	Actively seeks opportunities to improve systems or processes.	Demonstrates strong learning discipline and reflection.	Shows courage in raising concerns.	Contributes to forums, presentations or knowledge sharing.
5	Drives significant change beyond expected junior scope.	Consistently leads initiatives without being prompted.	Exceptional commitment to professional growth and mastery. Holds a CISA designation	Widely trusted as ethical role model.	Acts as ambassador for the profession.

D) Innovative Compliance Team of the Year

The Innovative Compliance Team of the Year award recognises compliance teams that have successfully implemented a genuinely innovative project, aligned to the GACP framework, delivering measurable impact and strengthening ethical and compliance practice within their organisation and across the profession.

Eligibility Criteria

Area	Detail
Membership	Minimum 20% of team must be CISA members; minimum 3 members per team; Must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance function representation, and • At least one cross-functional stakeholder (e.g. IT, legal, operations, risk, HR)
Leadership	Leadership preferably a holds CISA designation, if not, at least one team member must hold a CISA designation
GACP	Mandatory application of GACP
Project scope	Interested teams are to submit one project only, implemented in past 18 months; multiple projects will not be considered
Repeat winners	Winning projects cannot re-enter
External vendors	Internal ownership of the project is required; external vendors are not eligible
Organisational endorsement	Formal sign-off by HoC, Senior Exec of the company

Evidence Requirements

Each submission must include:

1. Project Summary (maximum 1,000 words)

A structured summary of the project, clearly describing:

- The compliance problem or risk that the project sought to address
- The innovation introduced (process, technology, governance or methodology)
- How the project applied or aligned with the GACP framework
- The outcomes achieved, including benefits to the organisation

The summary should focus on what is genuinely new or different, rather than standard compliance activities.

2. Impact Evidence



Objective evidence demonstrating the results of the project. Teams must provide at least two of the following:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Dashboards or management reports
- Before-and-after comparisons
- Audit or regulatory findings
- Risk assessments or control improvements

The evidence should show real implementation and measurable impact, not conceptual or pilot-stage initiatives.

3. Team Composition

A brief profile of the team, including:

- Names and roles of team members
- CISA membership numbers (where applicable)
- CISA designation details for team leadership

This information is used to confirm eligibility and professional standing.

4. Executive Endorsement

A written endorsement from the organisation's Head of Compliance or senior executive (exco member) confirming:

- The accuracy of the information submitted
- The credibility and significance of the impact
- The ethical standing of the project and team

The endorsement should validate that the project is genuine, internally led and not primarily vendor-driven.

Guidance Note

Submissions for this category must relate to one completed project only and demonstrate actual implementation within the past 18 months. Concept papers, future initiatives or marketing-led projects will not be considered. Any project that has previously received a CISA award shall be deemed ineligible for future award consideration, irrespective of subsequent modifications, enhancements or re-submission under a different category.



Prize framework

Prize	Detail
Team Certificates	Individual certificates issued to each team member Formal presentation at the CISA awards ceremony
Organisational Case Study Feature	Featured case study published on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o CISA websiteo CISA newsletter and social channels
Conference & Knowledge Platform	Team invited to Present the project at an upcoming CISA masterclass event
Symbolic and formal award	Trophy

Scoring rubric						
Score	Innovation and creativity – 25%	Measurable impact – 25%	Application of GACP – 20%	Practical implementation – 15%	Ethical and cultural impact – 10%	Transferability to industry – 5%
1	Minor process improvement; largely standard practice.	Limited or anecdotal impact.	GACP referenced but not embedded.	Conceptual or pilot only.	Minimal cultural impact.	Highly organisation-specific.
2	Some novel elements, but limited originality.	Some measurable improvements.	Partial alignment with GACP principles.	Implemented but limited adoption.	Some awareness raised.	Limited relevance to others.
3	Clear innovation beyond normal compliance practice.	Clear, documented organisational impact.	GACP clearly applied in key areas.	Fully implemented with evidence of use.	Positive shift in compliance culture.	Useful learning for similar organisations.
4	Highly innovative approach new to most organisation	Significant, multi-dimensional impact.	Strong integration across the project.	Embedded in business-as-usual processes.	Positive shift in compliance culture.	Easily replicable across sectors.
5	Breakthrough innovation that could reshape compliance practice.	Transformational impact with strong metrics.	GACP exemplary and model-worthy.	Fully embedded and sustainably governed.	Organisation-wide ethical transformation.	Best-practice model for the profession.