



Proposed Ethical Impact Assessment Framework: **ETHICRITICAL**

1. Introduction

CRITICAL P3M Ltd. proposes the recognition of its proprietary framework, ETHICRITICAL, as a reference model for ethical impact assessment in AI initiatives. ETHICRITICAL is submitted not as a formal standard from a standards body, but as a structured and practice-tested framework designed to fill a critical gap in AI governance. The intent of this submission is to present ETHICRITICAL to the AI standards community as a candidate model that contributes meaningfully to ethical AI practice and risk mitigation.

2. Rationale for Inclusion

The rapid adoption of AI systems has outpaced the integration of actionable tools for ethical risk assessment. ETHICRITICAL addresses this by offering a structured, measurable, and evidence-based framework for evaluating the ethical posture of AI projects throughout their lifecycle. While it is ideally applied at the earliest stages of an AI initiative, its design also enables engagement during mid- or late-stage evaluations, bridging technical, organisational, and societal dimensions.

3. Framework Summary (High-Level Overview)

ETHICRITICAL evaluates AI initiatives across seven critical themes, each supported by a structured taxonomy of sub-themes (available under controlled disclosure):

- **Solution Definition and Design**
- **Transparency**
- **Governance**
- **Fairness**
- **Security**
- **Correctives**
- **Sustainability**

Each dimension is assessed using a maturity model ranging from 0 (Unaware) to 5 (Societal Contribution). The framework applies a *minimum dominans*¹ approach, where the lowest-performing dimension determines the overall ethical maturity baseline. This method avoids the pitfalls of averaging and draws attention to high-risk gaps.

The assessment generates three scores:

1. **Actual Level** – the current state of practice
2. **Achievable Level** – what is realistically attainable under current conditions
3. **Target Level** – the intended strategic goal

These outputs are translated into a structured gap analysis and an associated improvement plan. The results support internal governance, risk mitigation, stakeholder assurance, and the commercial scaling of ethical AI practices.

4. Key Differentiators

ETHICRITICAL stands apart from other AI ethics tools and frameworks in four key ways:

- **Maturity Scale (0–5)** – Defines a clear developmental trajectory from awareness to societal contribution.
- **Minimum Threshold Model** – Prevents critical weaknesses from being masked by stronger areas.
- **Improvement Focus** – Provides specific, actionable recommendations based on identified gaps.
- **Evidence-Based Scoring** – Relies on demonstrable practices, not declarations or self-attestation.

5. Clarification of Status

ETHICRITICAL is not a standard issued by a national or international standards body. CRITICAL P3M Ltd. is a UK-based consultancy specialising in programme and project delivery, data governance, and AI ethical assessment. The framework is offered for reference and voluntary adoption and may be used as a benchmark or supplementary methodology in alignment with ISO/IEC 42001 or relevant sector-specific policies. It is submitted here as a candidate for broader recognition—whether as a reference framework, an integration point, or ultimately, as a formal standard.

¹ *Minimum Dominans*: Latin: ‘the least that dominates’ – the lowest-scoring theme determines the overall ethical maturity score.

6. Contact and Further Engagement

For further information or to explore the applicability of ETHICRITICAL to your organisation or sector, please contact:

CRITICAL P3M Ltd.

Email: ethics@criticalp3m.com

Web: www.ethicritical.com

Document version: 1 August 2025

Status: Submitted for listing consideration (not certified standard)