

UAE talent shines in global AI challenge as TII and Wazoku announce CrowdLabel winners

AI-focused competition draws 70 submissions from 29 countries to advance scalable human data labelling for large language models

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Technology Innovation Institute](#) (TII), part of Abu Dhabi's Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC), has announced the winners of its CrowdLabel Challenge, run in partnership with global innovation company [Wazoku](#) via its [Innocentive](#) platform.



Rikki Baines, Wazoku

The global competition sought innovative, scalable approaches to human data labelling for large language models (LLMs), a critical component in improving AI performance and alignment.

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Specifically, the challenge focused on identifying cost-effective alternatives to traditional reinforcement learning with human feedback (RLHF) methods, which typically rely on expensive expert annotators.

The challenge attracted 70 submissions from individuals across 29 countries, highlighting strong international interest in the future of AI development. Notably, five of the winning contributors are based in the UAE, underlining the depth of regional talent being surfaced through open

innovation.

The ‘Best Overall’ award, with a prize of \$30,000, was awarded to UAE-based team Poornima Nair, Madihah Anaum, and Megha Manoj for their Leap Language App. This is a solution designed to integrate data labelling into natural user interactions to generate high-quality training data at scale.

The project Leap team said: “With Project Leap, we wanted to flip the narrative. Instead of AI being a distraction to our mental focus, we turned it into a tool that actually improves how we learn. As recent graduates, this was our first major endeavour, handling everything from the initial spark of the idea to the final marketing strategy. Being young women ourselves, we also wanted to lead by example and inspire others to dive into tech; given its a male-dominated field.”

“Our core approach was built on the principle of integration: taking a wide range of different perspectives and technical disciplines to make a much bigger statement. A big challenge was finding that sweet spot: building a way to gather the data needed to personalize the learning journey while keeping the whole experience smooth and effortless for the user.”

“This challenge demonstrates how AI innovation is no longer confined to traditional centres of expertise,” said Rikki Bains, GCC Regional Director, Wazoku. “With 70 submissions from 29 countries - and five winners from the UAE - we are seeing first-hand the depth of talent and creativity that exists globally, and particularly within the region. Open innovation is helping to uncover that expertise and apply it to some of the most pressing challenges in AI today.”

The ‘Best Idea’ award, sharing \$5,000, went to Aditya Chatterjee, Adam Ibrahim, and George Ibrahim, also based in the UAE, for their FlyQ solution, which demonstrated strong potential in delivering scalable, crowdsourced human labelling with high-quality outputs. The trio, all aged between 20 and 27, have a track record of success in hackathons and have developed their own UAE-based platform, Socia, to connect innovators with opportunities.

Additional winners included:

- Faidh Feisal (UK), who won the ‘Best Execution’ award and \$15,000 for a solution that transforms digital advertising into productive data labelling opportunities
- Vicky Kamau (Kenya) and Amgad Samy (Egypt), who were each awarded \$3,000 for their contributions

The CrowdLabel Challenge reflected TII’s commitment to advancing AI research and development, particularly in areas that will define the next generation of intelligent systems. By exploring alternative approaches to human data labelling, the initiative aims to reduce costs, increase scalability, and broaden participation in AI development worldwide.

The challenge was run via Wazoku’s Innocentive platform, which connects organisations with a global network of more than 700,000 problem solvers spanning AI, engineering, science, and more.

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For further information about Wazoku, visit <https://www.wazoku.com>

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