SATNAC 2026 Industry Solutions Challenge (ISC)

Call for Participation

Theme: AI as the Last Mile: Building the Sustainable Digital Enterprise

The SATNAC Industry Solutions Challenge (ISC) 2026 invites undergraduate and postgraduate students from universities across South Africa to develop innovative, AI-enabled solutions to real-world challenges facing the telecommunications and ICT industry.

Working in multidisciplinary teams, participants will collaborate with industry experts, researchers and mentors to solve authentic business challenges while strengthening their technical, innovation and professional skills. The challenge provides a unique opportunity to apply academic knowledge to industry problems and showcase innovative solutions on a national platform.

Why Participate?

As a participant, you will have the opportunity to:

- Solve real industry challenges provided by leading telecommunications and technology organisations.
- Participate in industry-led masterclasses and mentorship sessions.
- Develop practical skills in AI, innovation and solution development.
- Collaborate with students from different disciplines and universities.
- Build professional networks with industry leaders and researchers.
- Showcase your innovation at one of South Africa's leading telecommunications conferences.
- Compete for recognition and exciting prizes.

Who Can Participate?

The SATNAC Industry Solutions Challenge is open to all registered undergraduate and postgraduate students from accredited South African higher education institutions.

We welcome students from all academic disciplines and fields of study who are passionate about innovation, problem-solving and creating solutions that address real industry challenges.

Participants may register as an individual or as a team of two (2) or three (3) members.

Challenge Domains

Participants will develop innovative AI-enabled solutions aligned with the SATNAC 2026 theme across the following challenge domains:

Domain	Description
AI-Enabled Intelligent Connectivity and Next-Generation Networks	Design intelligent communication networks that improve performance, automation, resilience, and customer experience.
AI-Powered Digital Infrastructure and Cloud Ecosystems	Develop intelligent digital infrastructure that enables scalable, resilient and sustainable digital enterprises.
AI for Sustainable Digital Transformation	Create AI-driven solutions that promote environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and responsible digital transformation.
AI-Driven Digital Enterprise and Intelligent Services	Transform organisations through AI-enabled automation, intelligent services, and enhanced customer experiences.
Trusted AI, Cybersecurity and Digital Trust	Develop secure, ethical, and trustworthy AI solutions that protect digital enterprises and critical infrastructure.
Future Technologies and Emerging Innovation	Explore disruptive technologies that will shape Africa's digital future.

Solution Development Journey

Participants will take part in a structured innovation and solution development programme designed to equip teams with the skills, tools and mentorship needed to solve real industry challenges.

The programme includes outcome-based innovation enablement masterclasses covering topics such as:

1. Problem Framing & Concept Design
2. Research Design & Validation
3. Business Modelling & Value Design
4. Technology & Architecture Design
5. Prototyping & MVP Development
6. Executive Pitch Readiness

Throughout the programme, teams will receive mentorship and feedback from industry professionals to refine their solutions.

Solution Deliverables

- **Project Report (6–8 Pages)**
  A technical report outlining the problem, proposed solution, technical approach, innovation, business value and expected impact.

- **Proof of Concept (PoC)**
  A functional prototype, simulation or demonstration validating the proposed solution.

- **Final Pitch**
  Present and demonstrate your solution to a panel of judges at the SATNAC Industry Solutions Challenge Finale.

Awards and Recognition

Winning teams will receive awards and recognition, which may include

- **Prizes:** Winning teams may receive **monetary prizes or technology devices**, generously sponsored by our industry partners.
- **Professional Development Opportunities**: Winning teams may also receive exclusive development opportunities, including:
  - Internship opportunities.
  - Vacation work opportunities.
  - Mentorship programmes with industry experts.
  - Visits to innovation hubs and technology centres.
- Networking opportunities with industry leaders.**SATNAC Recognition**
  Representatives of the winning teams will be invited to attend the **SATNAC Awards Ceremony**, where they will be recognised in the presence of industry leaders, government representatives, researchers and academics for their achievements.

Winning teams will also have the opportunity to **showcase their innovative solutions during the SATNAC Poster Presentation Session**, providing valuable exposure to conference delegates, industry leaders, researchers and academics.

Register Now

Ready to take on the challenge?

If you are passionate about innovation and want to develop solutions that make a real impact, we invite you to join the SATNAC 2026 Industry Solutions Challenge.

Register here:
https://forms.gle/9LajCEFisgXeRGrJ9

For more information about the challenge, programme timeline and important dates, visit:

Conference website: https://satnac.org.za/ General enquiries: satnac@telkom.co.za