

Meet the 12 MSDUK Finalists Trailblazing ‘Innovative Ideas for a Better World’ in National Innovation Challenge

MSDUK are Empowering Ethnic Minority-Owned Startups and Entrepreneurs, offering a £20k Cash Prize and more. The MSDUK finalists for this year’s Innovation Challenge have been announced, showcasing businesses founded by ethnic minority entrepreneurs.



Leicester, Leicestershire Jun 11, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - MSDUK is Empowering Ethnic Minority-Owned Startups and Entrepreneurs, offering a £20,000 Cash Prize and more. The MSDUK finalists for this year’s Innovation Challenge have been announced, showcasing businesses founded by ethnic minority entrepreneurs, with unique and ground-breaking innovations; they will be pitching their innovative solutions to MSDUK’s network at this year’s Business and Innovation Show on 14th September in London.

This year’s competition is sponsored by Accenture (headline sponsor), along with category sponsors EY (Digital Transformations), J.P. Morgan (Innovation Pioneers), GSK(Social Impact), and Cummins (Sustainable Development).

With record-breaking numbers of entries, the final entry numbers were double that of previous years and came from 35 different industries, with 14 different ethnic minority groups represented. With 201 submissions, it was exciting to see the range and calibre of applications, and it was tough to narrow down to just 12 finalists. Some of MSDUK’s network were invited to review and score the applications, and one of our judges has said: ‘The calibre of the submissions to the MSDUK Innovation Challenge in 2023 has been exceptional. I am excited to see what opportunities we and other corporates could work on with these innovators!’ – Jim Johnson, Corporate Indirect Procurement Sourcing Manager (Europe), Cummins.

Thank you to the judges who supported in reviewing and assessing this year’s applicants.

Industry leaders and emerging start-ups have rallied behind the theme of 'Innovative Ideas for a Better World.' The competition aims to address underrepresentation in the global supply chain, providing

young entrepreneurs and high-growth ethnic minority-owned businesses direct access to influential corporate organisations. The entries this year saw innovations from a wide variety of sectors covering health and beauty, food, education and training, information technology, and many more.

'I was really impressed with the standard of applications; I'm excited to see the progress of some of the great startups who have applied for the challenge and look forward to seeing the finalists pitch at the conference' – added judge Sophie Lonergan, Head of Startup Investment, Digital Catapult.

The MSDUK Innovation Challenge, now in its seventh year, invites businesses from ethnic minority backgrounds to showcase their ideas in front of global brands and procurement professionals. This year's challenge, themed 'Innovative Ideas for a Better World,' comprises four categories: Digital Transformations, Social Impact, Sustainable Development, and Innovation Pioneers. Businesses are invited to enter and compete in their respective sectors, presenting solutions that drive efficiency, address social issues, promote sustainable development, or challenge traditional norms. Prizes include a £20,000 cash prize, category prizes of £2,500, corporate mentoring from Accenture, and an out-of-home advertising campaign from JCDecaux.

Mayank Shah, the Founder, and CEO of MSDUK, said: "The importance of supplier diversity in levelling the playing field for ethnic minority businesses is a top priority. By finding innovative ideas for a better world and future for all through Innovation Challenge, we can raise the bar for ethnic minority-owned businesses, empowering them to bring about social change through their ideas and technologies."

To watch the 12 finalists, showcase their businesses and pitch for the incredible prizes and benefits on offer, purchase your tickets now for the event. To find out more and buy your tickets today, please visit: <https://www.conference.msduk.org.uk/>

About MSDUK

MSDUK remains committed to championing diversity and inclusion in supply chains, fostering business performance, innovation, and growth. Through their initiatives, they strive to create a more inclusive Britain and continue their work with ethnic minority businesses and Fortune 500 firms.

For more information about the MSDUK Innovation Challenge, visit the official website at <https://www.msduk.org.uk/programmes/innovation-challenge>

About the finalists

Andre Hallack Miranda Pureza, Beautiful Voice

Beautiful Voice is a digital health platform that employs artificial intelligence and gamification to improve speech and language therapy delivery. It aims to make high-quality speech and language therapy more accessible, efficient, and data-driven to enable better therapy outcomes for patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

Chunli Cao, Healthy Air Technology

Healthy Air Technology Ltd, specialises in air purifiers that improve global indoor air quality. Leveraging our unique and patented DNO-Catalyst technology from an Oxford University scientist, with expertise in aerodynamics, and building design, the company creates innovative air purification solutions. Furthermore, our technology effectively removes volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that other purifiers

cannot eliminate, ensuring a cleaner and safer indoor environment for its users. With a £376k annual turnover and sales in 6 countries, HATL serves diverse industries, including offices, hospitals, and sports teams. Committed to promoting healthier lifestyles, the company continually advances its technology to enhance customers' well-being.

Claudio Kwaku Owusu, Gusto Snacks

Gusto Snacks is an award-winning ethical focused company that uses farm-rejected fruits to produce delicious and healthy snacks, to act on food waste. We act as a bridge between farmers and consumers, improving the economic output of farmers by re-introducing the rescued produce to the market using innovative snacking propositions.

The idea to overhaul the snack market by introducing healthier snacks to drive down the consumption of fried and unhealthy snacks came to Claudio and Giuseppe while at university. After two years of product development, they launched their air-dried fruit crisps mixed with exotic flavours.

Dupe Burgess, Bloomful

Care pathways for common gynaecological conditions such as PCOS and endometriosis are long, chaotic, and ambiguous. Delayed diagnoses impact women's quality of life, mental wellbeing, and ability to work, whilst research groups and biotech companies struggle to obtain data for research. Bloomful is an AI-driven triage solution that helps women to access better care for their gynaecological health. Whilst doing so, our backend infrastructure collects organised, longitudinal data sets through which Contract Research Organisations, biotech companies, and big pharma can access patients for their clinical trials and data assets to facilitate drug discovery and enable better research in the field."

Ersin Guray, PoiLabs

PoiLabs is a cutting-edge technology company that provides an inclusive indoor positioning platform for smart buildings. With its unique indoor navigation solution for the visually impaired and blind, PoiLabs creates accessible venues that are open to everyone. In addition to this, PoiLabs offers digitalisation services for physical spaces by providing indoor navigation, indoor analytics, and location-based marketing services. These innovative technology solutions empower businesses to make their spaces accessible to everyone, track and understand customer behaviour, enhance customer experience, and increase revenue through location-based marketing strategies.

Giovanni Montefiori, Beakbook

Beakbook is a weight prediction tool for poultry, specialising in high accuracy. We help farmers anticipate poor growth and welfare and avoid disasters on their farms. Improved planning practices will unlock \$500mn per year globally for poultry. Since launching in November 2022, we've gone live in Kenya, Zambia, and Myanmar, and run pilots in the UK. Long term, we will expand across agricultural goods and pioneer AI-inclusivity for farmers.

Iris Anson, Etiq AI

Every car needs regular servicing and annual MOT to run safely on the road, so does every AI system and this is what we do at Etiq AI! Data quality & model issues could cost you, your customers, your reputation, and money. In a recent catastrophe, Zillow a property trading platform lost \$500m as a result, so what's the cost of keeping your AI on the road? To address this, we've developed a software

platform for organisations to easily test and optimise their AI, by flagging up errors, risks, and repair recommendations both in development and for ongoing monitoring. The result? You will get a more robust, more transparent, and responsible AI.

Josephine Liang, Cauli

Cauli is an award-winning climate tech startup that provides reusable food & beverage packaging solutions for workplace and event dining to eliminate 65MT of single-use packaging waste and disrupt the \$405B global food packaging market. Cauli's software and solution enable over half a million catering operators worldwide to run their own circular packaging systems onsite, while they retain full control over operations.

Michael Wise, Concrete4Change

Concrete4Change is developing a novel technology for safe and permanent carbon dioxide sequestration into concrete, helping concrete manufacturers and the construction industry achieve net-zero. Concrete can naturally absorb CO₂ - this process is known as carbonation, but it can never reach to full potential in nature. With C4C technology, we exploit this potential, enabling concrete to become the safest form of CO₂ sink in the world. Even after the demolition of concrete, CO₂ will not leak. We achieve this via a specially designed, proprietary, and low-cost porous granular absorbent material, that acts as a carrier for CO₂.

Ryan Robinson, Aeropowder

Aeropowder is a material innovation company that is revolutionising the circular economy by transforming surplus feathers, generated in the millions of tons around the world, into high-performance materials. Our initial product, Pluumo, is a thermal packaging material that outperforms expanded polystyrene - allowing the delivery of temperature-sensitive food and pharmaceuticals to be made without using plastic thermal packaging. Pluumo is just the start, and we are proud to be at the forefront of innovation in waste reduction, sustainability, and the circular economy. We look forward to continuing to create unique feather-based solutions for global impact.

Swakara Atwell-Bennett, BetterShared

BetterShared makes everyday spaces inclusive through diverse art. The BetterShared team collectively has over 20 years of experience across the tech and creative industries. CEO and Founder Swakara Atwell-Bennett spent more than a decade in the tech and creative industries (UX and UI) before founding BetterShared. Swakara's career in tech has seen her both design and lead teams to build global consumer and B2B digital products including apps and websites across fin-tech, FMCG, e-commerce, creative and cultural sectors working with some of the world's largest brands including but not limited to; Arcadis consultancy, Unilever, Tesco, PWC, and RBS. Gaining experience and insights on enterprise clients and solutions that fit their needs.

Youmna Mouhamad, Nyfasi

Nyfasi's technology enables the application and distribution of consumables while detangling. Our technology has various applications, including the hair care industry, the pet industry, and disabled individuals. Our first product, the Deluxe Detangler, targets the textured hair segment, which includes curly and afro-textured hair. It coats hair with hair care treatments while detangling; the patented distribution mechanism enhances slip, enabling easy detangling, even distribution, and fast application,

saving up to 30 minutes. The Deluxe Detangler is endorsed by Dr. Zoe Willams from ITV This Morning and Felicia Leatherwood, Hollywood's number 1 hairdresser.



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