

Continental Youth AI Challenge (CYAC) FAQs

Priority Questions

1 What exactly must I deliver to qualify for judging?

Please follow the link to quiviveglobal.org/cyac and follow the detailed submission guidelines

2 What are the judging criteria and their respective weightings?

- Technical → Does the AI work and is it built well?
- Business and scalability → Can it grow across borders, languages and markets?
- Venture Profitability → Can it sustain itself commercially or financially?
- Impact assessment → What measurable difference will it make?
- Uniqueness → Is it original and genuinely African in relevance?

The scoring methodology, judging panel and mentorship structure will be published before the call opens

3 Who owns my solution, data, and intellectual property?

Quivive Global runs the Challenge and receives the intellectual property in all submissions. Ownership rules, including how that IP supports the winners' ventures, are set out in the terms and conditions.

4 What support is guaranteed if I win?

Winners receive a take-home grant, plus backing to launch and scale the venture.

5 What happens to my solution after the competition?

(What is the CYAC policy on this?) Solution becomes Quivive IP for which the entrant will receive mentorship to further their development.

1. About the Challenge

Q1. What is an AI challenge?

An AI challenge is a competition that invites individuals, teams, researchers, startups, and organisations to develop innovative solutions to a defined problem using artificial intelligence (AI). Participants submit ideas, prototypes, or working solutions that are evaluated against established criteria.

Q2. What is the purpose of this AI challenge?

The purpose is to encourage innovation, identify promising AI solutions, and support the development of technologies that address real-world African problems or produce Africa focused innovations. The challenge objectives may include improving public services, advancing research, supporting businesses, or tackling social and economic issues.

Q3. What types of AI solutions are eligible?

Eligible solutions may include any solutions along the 9 categories listed on the submission track. Read the submission guidelines on quiviveglobal.org/cyac

Q4. Do I need to develop an entirely new AI model?

Not necessarily, you may use existing open-source tools, APIs, or pre-trained systems to develop your solution. However, your entry should demonstrate meaningful innovation and clearly explain your contribution.

Q5. Must my solution already be working?

The CYAC challenge accepts early-stage ideas, research proposals, or proof-of-concept demonstrations. The challenge also welcomes a functional prototype or production-ready solution. Read the category specific entry requirements here quiviveglobal.org/cyac before submitting.

2. Eligibility and Participation

Q6. Who can enter the CYAC challenge?

Individual innovators and developers.

Students and recent graduates.

Researchers and academics.

Startups and entrepreneurs.

Established businesses.

Non-profit organisations and social enterprises.

Multidisciplinary teams combining technical and non-technical expertise.

Q7. Can I enter as an individual, or must I form a team?

Entering the Continental Youth AI Challenge (CYAC) is open to all individuals under the age of 40. Submissions are open to entrants from all countries. Teams can also participate if all members are under 40. Teams must state the name of the team lead, country and submission track.

Q8. Do I need to be an AI expert to participate?

Not necessarily. CYAC welcomes beginners and participants with limited technical experience, particularly for the open innovation track where the emphasis is on identifying problems and proposing innovative solutions.

However, participants should review their solution's technical requirements to determine whether they need a team with programming, data science, or machine-learning skills.

Q9. Can participants from different countries enter?

Submissions are open to entrants from all countries.

Q10. Can I collaborate with people from other organisations or countries?

Yes you can. The CYAC rules do not limit entrants by region, country or location. Collaboration can bring together different technical capabilities, local knowledge, research expertise, and industry experience. Participants should clarify team eligibility, contribution requirements, and intellectual property arrangements before collaborating.

Q11. Can I enter more than one solution?

Only one submission per applicant is allowed.

3. Developing Your AI Solution

Q12. How do I choose a problem to solve?

Start by identifying a clearly defined problem affecting a particular group of people, industry, or community in Africa. Identify which of the 9 submission categories a solution to the identified problem fits into.

Consider:

How significant is the problem?

Who experiences it, and how frequently?

What solutions already exist?

Why are current solutions inadequate?

Could AI provide a meaningful advantage?

Can you access the data and resources needed to build and test a solution?

How would you measure success?

A strong entry demonstrates not only technical capability but also a clear understanding of the problem.

Q13. Do I need to use a particular AI technology or platform?

Participants are free to choose suitable technologies, programming languages, frameworks, and development platforms.

Your choice should be justified by the problem, technical requirements, cost, performance, and intended users.

Q14. Can I use existing AI tools or commercially available models?

No, this is not permitted by the challenge rules. Participants should identify which existing tools they have used and explain what they have developed themselves.

Q15. Will data be provided to participants?

Participants must source or create their own datasets.

You may collect data independently, however, ensure that you have the necessary permissions and comply with applicable privacy and data protection requirements.

Q16. Can I use synthetic or publicly available data?

Potentially, yes. The rules permit publicly available, licensed, anonymised, or synthetically generated data.

However, you should explain where your data comes from, how it was prepared, and any limitations that could affect the solution's performance or reliability.

Q17. What if my solution uses AI but also includes non-AI components?

A complete solution may combine AI with conventional software, databases, human expertise, workflow automation, or other technologies.

The important question is whether AI contributes meaningful value to solving the stated problem.

4. Submission Requirements

Q18. What must I submit?

A description of the problem and proposed solution.

An explanation of the AI technology used.

A prototype, demonstration, or working application.

A video demonstrating the solution.

Source code or a technical repository.

A description of the data used.

Test results and performance measurements.

An implementation or commercialisation plan.

A budget and development roadmap.

See the official CYAC submission guideline at quiviveglobal.org/cyac

The official submission checklist should take precedence over this general guidance.

Q19. Do I need to submit source code?

You may submit source code for technical evaluation, however CYAC also accepts demonstrations, prototypes, reports, or access to a working application.

Q19a. Can source code be made public, submitted privately, or shared only with authorised evaluators?

Source code is not to be made public. Once submitted the source code becomes the CYAC intellectual property according to challenge Terms and Conditions. Entrants must ensure they have the rights to submit the source code.

Q20. Can I submit a solution that is still under development?

Yes, the challenge accepts prototypes or early-stage projects. Clearly explain what currently works, what remains under development, and what you would achieve with additional time or resources.

Q21. What happens if I miss the submission deadline?

Late submissions may be rejected unless permissions, extensions or exceptions have explicitly been agreed. Submit early enough to allow for technical problems, file-format issues, and any required registration or verification.

Q22. Can I update my submission after submitting it?

Changes to submissions based on updates are allowed in a limited fashion. There is a resubmission form that can be regenerated by a resubmission code.

5. Judging and Evaluation

Q23. How will entries be evaluated?

Entries may be assessed against criteria such as:

Evaluation criterion	What judges may consider
Problem relevance	How important and clearly defined is the problem?
Innovation	Does the solution introduce a meaningful improvement?
Technical quality	Does the AI work reliably and appropriately?
Impact	What measurable benefit could the solution deliver?
Feasibility	Can the solution realistically be implemented?
Scalability	Can it be expanded to serve more users or locations?
Responsible AI	Does it address privacy, fairness, safety, and transparency?
Sustainability	Can it remain useful and financially viable over time?
Presentation	Is the proposal clear, convincing, and supported by evidence?

Q24. Does the most technically advanced solution always win?

No. A technically sophisticated solution may still perform poorly if it fails to address the problem, is too expensive to implement, or offers little advantage over existing alternatives.

Judges may favour a simpler solution that delivers clear, measurable, and sustainable benefits.

Q25. Will judges evaluate the commercial potential of my solution?

Where commercialisation is relevant, judges may consider the target market, demand, competitive advantage, business model, operating costs, and potential for growth.

For social-impact challenges, they may place greater emphasis on affordability, accessibility, community benefit, and long-term sustainability.

Q26. Will I receive feedback if my entry is unsuccessful?

Entrants will hear from us if their application is successful. Also, entrants will be notified whether or not they have moved to the next round.

Q27. Can I appeal a judging decision?

Only if the competition rules provide an appeal or review process. Such processes may be limited to procedural errors, eligibility decisions, or breaches of the published rules rather than disagreements with judges' opinions.

6. Prizes, Funding and Support

Q28. What prizes are available?

Every entrant has access to the mentorship programme.

Finalists receive support to build a prototype and pitch to judges and investors.

Winners receive a take home grant plus backing to launch and scale the venture.

Shortlisted teams receive introductions to partners offering pilots and follow on investment.

Q29. Does winning guarantee funding to develop my solution?

Winners receive a take home grant plus backing to launch and scale the venture.

Participants should establish what support is guaranteed and what is conditional.

Q30. Will the organisers help me commercialise my solution?

The Winner or winning team will receive backing to launch and scale the venture.

Q31. Do I have to pay to enter?

Entrants do not have to pay to enter the challenge.

Participants should also consider their own expenses, including data, computing, travel, equipment, and development time.

7. Intellectual Property and Ownership

Q32. Who owns the AI solution I develop?

According to the competition terms, participants may retain ownership of their pre-existing technology however newly developed intellectual property transfers to Quivive Global upon entry into the challenge.

Read the intellectual property terms before submitting your entry. Do not assume that you automatically retain all rights simply because you developed the solution.

Q33. Can I continue developing my solution after the challenge ends?

After the challenge, the solutions assessed become the foundation and competition's intellectual property, including licensing and confidentiality rights, and exclusivity provisions.

Q35. Can the organisers or sponsors commercialise my idea without my permission?

The commercialisation rights are governed by the competition agreement and intellectual property law.

If terms are unclear, seek clarification before submitting.

Additional FAQs

8. African Innovation, Ownership and Impact

Q36. Must my AI solution address a problem in Africa?

This challenge is specifically focused on Africa, entries should demonstrate a clear connection to African needs, opportunities, or development priorities.

Relevant areas include agriculture, healthcare, education, financial inclusion, energy, climate resilience, local languages, public services, transport, and supply-chain management.

The solutions must be judged on scalability in multiple African countries, or the continent more broadly.

Q37. Must my solution be developed by an African individual or organisation?

No. The competition is open to everyone proposing solutions for African problems, issues and markets.

The solution must benefit Africa, but not necessarily be developed by an African.

Q38. How will the challenge assess the contribution of African researchers and institutions?

Judges may examine:

The role of African researchers and developers in designing the solution.

The participation of African universities, research institutions, and businesses.

Whether local knowledge informs the problem definition.

Whether African teams develop meaningful technical expertise.

Whether research findings and technical capabilities remain accessible to participating African institutions.

Whether local organisations can maintain and improve the solution after the challenge.

The assessment shall consider the substance of these contributions, not simply the location of the lead applicant.

Q39. Does my solution need to use African datasets or local languages?

Not every solution may require them, for example, the open innovation category. However, where relevant, locally representative datasets and African languages improve accuracy, accessibility, and usefulness then yes.

Participants should explain how their data reflects the intended users and whether the solution performs adequately across different communities, languages, and operating conditions.

Q40. How will the challenge evaluate African ownership of the resulting technology?

CYAC assesses who owns the intellectual property, controls the underlying technology, makes key technical decisions, and has the ability to maintain and develop the solution.

They may also consider the ownership of datasets, access to model weights and source code, control over deployment infrastructure, and the rights of local partners.

Q41. Can a solution qualify if it uses a foreign AI model or cloud platform?

Yes, unless the rules impose restrictions. Using an international AI model or cloud service does not automatically make a solution less valuable or less African.

However, participants should disclose important dependencies, including ongoing usage fees, foreign infrastructure requirements, data transfer arrangements, licensing restrictions, and the consequences of losing access to the service.

They should also explain how they would reduce critical dependencies if the solution needed to operate independently or at lower cost.

Q42. What does African AI sovereignty mean in this challenge?

African AI sovereignty refers to the ability of African individuals, institutions, businesses, and governments to exercise meaningful control over the AI capabilities they develop or depend upon.

Depending on the solution, this may involve control over intellectual property, data governance, technical expertise, deployment choices, infrastructure, and commercialisation.

It does not necessarily mean avoiding all international partnerships. Instead, it encourages partnerships that build African capabilities and preserve meaningful local decision-making power.

Q43. Will solutions be judged on the economic value they create in Africa?

Economic impact is part of the competition's objectives that judges consider:

There's also:

Potential to create skilled employment.

Opportunities for African businesses and startups.

Revenue retained by local enterprises.

Development of local technical expertise.

Potential for local manufacturing or service provision.

Opportunities to export African-developed AI products.

Reduced dependence on costly external services.

Participants should support their claims with realistic assumptions and measurable indicators wherever possible.

Q44. Can international organisations sponsor or fund African AI solutions?

Yes. International sponsors, investors, research institutions, technology companies, and development organisations can contribute funding, expertise, infrastructure, and market access.

The important considerations include the funding terms, ownership rights, data access, licensing, decision-making arrangements, and long-term obligations attached to the support.

Q45. What happens to my solution if the challenge sponsor provides the funding or technology?

The sponsor's contribution does not, by itself, establish ownership of a solution. Ownership and usage rights depend on the applicable agreements.

Sponsors may receive recognition, access to results, licensing rights, equity, repayment obligations, or any other benefits in exchange for their support.

9. Responsible AI, Data and Security

Q46. How should I address ethical concerns in my AI solution?

Identify potential risks, including bias, discrimination, privacy violations, misleading outputs, and harm to vulnerable users.

Explain how you will test for these risks, mitigate them, monitor performance, and provide appropriate human oversight.

Q47. What happens if my solution produces inaccurate or harmful results?

Participants should describe the limitations of their systems and the measures used to detect and manage errors.

Depending on the application, safeguards may include human review, confidence thresholds, escalation procedures, clear user warnings, and mechanisms for correcting mistakes.

Q48. Can I use personal or sensitive data to develop my solution?

Only where you have a lawful basis and the necessary permissions and safeguards. You should minimise the use of personal data to protect it against unauthorised access, and comply with applicable data protection laws.

For this African-focused challenge, participants should also consider the relevant national legal frameworks and cross-border data transfer requirements.

Q49. Do I need to explain how my AI model works?

You should provide an explanation appropriate to the challenge's requirements and the intended users.

This includes the model's purpose, inputs, outputs, data sources, known limitations, evaluation methods, and important dependencies. For high-impact applications, explainability and human oversight are especially important.

10. After the Challenge

Q50. What happens after the winners are announced?

Depending on the programme, winners may receive their prizes, participate in demonstrations, enter an incubation programme, undertake pilot projects, or negotiate partnerships with sponsors and potential customers.

The organisers shall explain the expected timeline and any obligations winners must fulfil.

Q51. Will the challenge help me find customers or implementation partners?

All entrants will receive mentorship. However, mentorships do not guarantee contracts, investment, or adoption.

Q52. Can unsuccessful participants continue developing their solutions?

Unsuccessful participants have the opportunity to join the mentorship programs to develop their solutions but they have to join the mentorship program to continue developing their solution.

Q53. How can I stay informed about future AI challenges?

Follow the Quivive' official communication channels and subscribe to announcements about future competitions, funding opportunities, mentoring programmes, and AI innovation events.

Participants can also build relationships with research institutions, professional networks, technology communities, and organisations working in their chosen problem area.