



The Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Cape Higher Education Consortium

WESTERN CAPE ECONOMY INNOVATION AWARDS NOMINATION FORM 2026

Please complete this nomination form accurately, completely, but succinctly.

1. Contact details

Nominator (Person)	Nominating Organisation	Signature	Date	e-mail address
Prof Ingrid Rewitzky	Stellenbosch University		2026-03-16	rewitzky@sun.ac.za

Nominated Person	Nominated Organisation	Sub-sector one of the following: Private Sector or Academia or Public Sector or Non-Profit	Cell phone number	e-mail address
N/A	The African Institute for Mathematical Sciences – South Africa (AIMS SA)	Academia	N/A	info@aims.ac.za

2. Short description

±100-word description of what the innovation / solution is and who needs to be recognised for which parts of the solution.

(e.g. new service /product /solution /regulation /infrastructure /institutional capacity)

The African Institute for Mathematical Sciences South Africa (AIMS SA) is nominated for its transformative, collaborative educational model that develops high-level scientific and quantitative talent. Operating through a unique partnership with the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the University of Cape Town (UCT), and Stellenbosch University (SU), AIMS SA brings leading global faculty to the Western Cape to teach intensive courses in mathematical sciences, data science, and artificial intelligence. This innovative model bridges the gap between academia and industry, producing highly skilled graduates who directly strengthen the Western Cape's knowledge economy, enhance local university teaching capacity, and drive innovation in sectors such as finance, technology, and public health.

3. Detailed description

Please answer all the questions (a) to (j) below, and **place answers** in the **prescribed place** as indicated in the **table below** (to construct a results chain).

For instance, the answer to question (a) should be written in the third column next to (a).

- a. What is the target business group/s that this innovation serves and improves?
- b. How many of these target businesses have already utilised this new solution?
- c. How did these businesses access and receive the new solution?
- d. What did this new solution help these businesses become better at?
- e. How did this help to improve their business performance? *Increased sales, lower costs, increased investment, increased employment, increased exports?*
- f. What exactly is this new innovative solution?
- g. What makes it new, compared to what existed before? (Novelty in WC economy)
- h. What makes it better than what existed before?
- i. How is/was the new solution made available to the target market / business group?
- j. What will ensure that the financial viability / sustainability of providing the innovative solution and the beneficial consequences remain intact over this period? *E.g. profitable business with an enduring competitive advantage in the market.* What is the expected longevity of this solution? *E.g. 5yrs, 10 yrs, 10+ years*

Output: A new catalytic innovation established, serves the WC economy	Outcome: Improved business environment (for the target business group)	Impact: Which target group of businesses benefitted & what improved for them	Longevity: Duration of benefits
f. The innovation is AIMS SA's unique educational model: a collaborative postgraduate institute that does not rely on a permanent faculty. Instead, it brings leading international lecturers from top global institutions to teach intensive three-week courses. Degrees are awarded in partnership with three local universities (UWC, UCT, SU).	i. The solution is delivered through intensive, fully-funded postgraduate programmes (supported by the SA government, Mastercard Foundation, and Google DeepMind), regular industry-academia workshops, and the AIMS Schools Enrichment Centre (AIMSSEC), which builds the long-term pipeline of quantitative skills by training mathematics teachers.	a. The primary target groups are technology companies, financial institutions, research organizations, and the higher education sector within the Western Cape and broader South Africa. This includes major employers like Standard Bank, Praelaxis AI, and research centres like SACEMA (South African Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis).	j. AIMS SA has demonstrated sustainability over two decades (established in 2003). Its financial viability is secured through diverse, high-level partnerships, including the South African government, the Mastercard Foundation, and Google DeepMind. The model's success has led to its replication across five other African countries, proving its robustness. The expected longevity of this solution is 10+
g. Traditional university models rely on fixed, permanent faculties and siloed degree programmes. AIMS SA pioneered a rotating global faculty model combined with a highly collaborative inter-university partnership (UWC, UCT, SU) that is rare in South Africa's higher education system. It rapidly adapts its curriculum to cutting-edge developments, such as AI	c. Businesses access this talent pool through direct recruitment of AIMS SA graduates, participation in AIMS-hosted international workshops and collaborative research initiatives, and through partnerships such as the AI for Science programme supported by Google DeepMind.	b. Since 2003, AIMS SA has produced 1,157 graduates from 44 countries. A significant portion of these graduates are employed in the South African private sector (e.g., Standard Bank, Praelaxis AI) and academia. Furthermore, over 62 AIMS alumni have become lecturers at South African universities, directly impacting the quality of STEM education nationwide.	

<p>and data science.</p> <p>h. This model ensures students are exposed to the absolute forefront of global scientific knowledge without the Western Cape needing to permanently employ hundreds of international experts. It fosters rapid knowledge transfer, promotes exceptional gender inclusion (42% women in the 2025/2026 cohort, and 63% in the Mathematical Sciences stream), and builds a pan-African network of scientists headquartered in the Western Cape.</p>		<p>d. AIMS SA provides these sectors with a pipeline of highly trained quantitative analysts, data scientists, and mathematical modellers. This enables businesses to build advanced machine learning models, improve financial risk quantification, automate complex processes, and develop scalable production systems. For the higher education sector, AIMS SA provides highly qualified lecturers who strengthen the teaching of STEM subjects.</p> <p>e. By employing AIMS SA graduates, businesses benefit from enhanced decision-making, regulatory compliance (e.g., credit risk models in banking), and the development of innovative products. The influx of top-tier talent supports increased investment in the region's tech and finance sectors and fosters a competitive advantage in the global knowledge economy.</p>	<p>years, as the demand for AI and data science skills continues to grow exponentially.</p>
--	--	---	---

After completing the table, read from left to right. Check for coherence and improve if needed.

4. Declaration of Evidence to verify the results chain

What supporting evidence can you provide to verify that the results stated above are as stated?

	Output: A new catalytic innovation established, serves the WC economy	Outcome: Improved business environment (for the target business group)	Impact: Which target group of businesses benefitted & what improved for them	Longevity: Duration of benefits
<p>What evidence can be provided? e.g. Records, reports, peer reviews, and so forth</p>			<p>The success of the AIMS SA model is best demonstrated by the impact of its alumni on the economy and academia:</p> <p>Ndivhuwo Mphephu (2013 Cohort): Quantitative Analyst at Standard Bank South Africa, developing credit risk models for regulatory purposes in Corporate and Investment Banking. Previously assessed risk models for the South African Reserve Bank.</p> <p>Asmaa Tbaeen (2017 Cohort): Data Scientist at Praelexis AI (Stellenbosch), bridging theoretical research with real-world applications to develop scalable machine-learning models and production systems.</p> <p>Prof. Omowunmi Isafiade (2010 Cohort): Associate Professor in Computer Science at UWC, holding numerous international grants and awards, directly strengthening the Western Cape's academic research capacity.</p> <p>Zinhle Mthombothi (2015 Cohort) & Comfort Jones (2024)</p>	

			<p>Cohort): Researchers at SACEMA (Stellenbosch University), applying mathematical modelling to critical public health challenges, including epidemiological modelling and wastewater surveillance.</p> <p>Ndivhuwo Prince Tshivhasa (2022 Cohort): Data Scientist at Standard Bank Group, applying NLP and data engineering to automate financial reporting, while also founding an initiative to promote STEM education and youth empowerment.</p>	
--	--	--	--	--

5. Select the best category of award for this innovation

Sector	Award	Mark with "X"
Private Sector	6 x Catalytic innovations that contribute to growth	
	1 x Provincial- or National-government systemic innovation most impactful on economic growth	
Public Sector	1 x Local & District Municipal innovation that is impactful on growth of their local economy	
	1 x Public-sector innovation, enhancing good governance	
Safety & Security	1 x Innovation enhancing safety & security	
Labour Market	1 x Labour market efficacy award Reducing impediments to increased employment	
	1 x Research the most impactful on competitiveness of Industry	
Academia	1 x Tertiary education best aligned to Industry / market needs	X
	1 x Most successful start-up / spin-out	
	1 x Entrepreneurship development in higher education	
Industry Sector Bodies	1 x Institution/s strengthening stakeholder cooperation to enhance competitiveness of their Industry	
Organised Business	1 x Institution/s strengthening stakeholder cooperation to enhance competitiveness of their business precincts	

AIMS South Africa perfectly embodies the criteria for the **Academia – Tertiary education best aligned to Industry / market needs** award. By pioneering a novel, collaborative educational model, AIMS SA has positioned the Western Cape as a global hub for mathematical sciences and AI. It provides the critical high-level quantitative talent required by the modern knowledge economy, directly benefiting local industries, strengthening university capacity, and driving sustainable economic growth in the region.

6. Check that you completed all that is necessary.

7. Submit this documented and/or video-recorded to innovation@capechamber.co.za.

Thank you for helping us discover and celebrate the champions shaping a better WC economy!