

Zinnov Awards 2026 – AI Innovation Vanguard

SECTION A – Personal & Role Details

Best Practices

- Keep all details **accurate, current, and consistent** with internal and external profiles.
- Describe your role in **1–2 crisp lines**, focusing exclusively on the **AI, ML, data, automation, or innovation** components of your mandate.
- Avoid generic managerial responsibilities; make your AI ownership explicit (e.g., “AI Platform Delivery,” “Model Engineering,” “ML Systems,” “Innovation Charter”).

Zinnov-Tip:

*Position your role in the context of the **capability you drive**, not the designation you hold.*

SECTION B – Leadership Track vs. IC Track

The track selection is critical — evaluators apply **different scoring lenses** based on this choice. Select the track that most accurately reflects your **primary mode of contribution**, not your title.

Selecting the Appropriate Track

Leadership Track – Select if you:

- Anchor the **AI strategy, roadmap, and prioritization** for your function.
- Provide **direction and oversight** to teams executing AI/ML programs.
- Drive **cross-functional buy-in, capability-building, and governance**.
- Influence organizational AI maturity through frameworks, policies, or reusable assets.
- Lead teams **directly or indirectly**.

IC Track – Select if you:

- Individually build, architect, design, or optimize **AI/ML systems**.
- Demonstrate deep technical innovation through **hands-on model development**.
- Contribute via **experimentation, engineering excellence, and solution design**.
- Do not carry a people-management responsibility as your primary role.

Zinnov-Tip:

*Choose based on **actual contribution**, not hierarchy.*

How Responses Should Differ by Track

Leadership Track – Your responses should reflect:

- Strategic clarity: north-star vision, prioritization, and transformation agenda.
- Ecosystem influence: stakeholder alignment, adoption orchestration, & governance.
- Enabler capabilities: operating models, frameworks, quality standards, talent uplift.

- Impact at portfolio scale, not just project scale.

IC Track – Your responses should reflect:

- Technical craftsmanship: architecture, model design, experimentation, and pipelines.
- Innovation depth: novel techniques, domain fine-tuning, frameworks authored.
- Complexity management: solving hard engineering challenges.
- Individual ownership of critical modules or IP.

Zinnov-Tip:

Leadership = Vision + Influence.

IC = Craft + Innovation Depth

SECTION C – Nomination Justification

This section carries the most weight. Responses must be structured, concise, & metric led.

Problem Statement

Write a 2–3-line articulation covering:

- Context: Where this problem sat (business unit/function).
- Pain Point: The inefficiency, risk, or opportunity gap.
- Scale: Quantify the size of the challenge.

Zinnov-example:

“Manual underwriting processes across two regions resulted in 7–10 day cycle times, ~15% revenue leakage, and inconsistent decision quality”

AI/ML Innovation Description (Core Narrative of Your Nomination)

This is the centrepiece of the form. Your response must demonstrate novelty, rigor, and applied innovation.

Include:

- What was built (solution overview).
- Why it is innovative (the differentiator).
- AI/ML techniques (LLMs, RAG pipelines, GNNs, generative modelling, etc.).
- Architecture and data approach (summarized, not exhaustive).
- Scale of deployment (data volumes, user groups, markets).
- Timeline and velocity.

Leadership Track:

Highlight decisions, strategic trade-offs, governance models, and cross-org influence.

IC Track:

Detail model architectures, pipelines, fine-tuning strategies, evaluation frameworks, and experimentation.

Individual Contribution

The Excel form evaluates your personal contribution, not the team's.

Leadership Track:

Show:

- Vision-setting and strategic direction.
- Key decisions made.
- How you enabled execution and removed constraints.
- Stakeholder alignment and cross-functional orchestration.
- Org-wide capability uplift.

IC Track:

Show:

- Model development ownership.
- Pipeline design, features engineered, methods implemented.
- Performance optimization, evaluation metrics, experimentation rigor.
- Patents, frameworks, reusable accelerators authored.

Zinnov-Tip:

Use sharp bullets beginning with high-impact verbs (Architected, Led, Designed, Engineered, Defined).

Tangible Impact (Mandatory Quantification)

Impact must be:

- Measurable
- Time-bound
- Directly attributable

Impact categories expected in this form:

- Efficiency (cycle time reduction, automation levels)
- Accuracy or precision improvements
- Cost optimization
- Revenue influence
- Engineering velocity
- Risk or compliance uplift
- Employee or customer experience

Zinnov-Style Format:

“Reduced manual review effort by 58% within two quarters, enabling a 2.5x improvement in throughput.”

Innovation Differentiator

This field requires a crisp, evidence-backed articulation of what sets your innovation apart.

Examples:

- First-of-its-kind application in your domain
- Novel architecture or evaluation method
- Creation of reusable IP or accelerators
- Domain-specialized LLM adaptation
- Deployment under unique constraints (scale, compliance, security)

Leadership: Differentiator = Organizational scale + strategic impact

IC: Differentiator = Technical novelty + invention depth

SECTION D – Evidence & Supporting Artefacts

The Excel form expects clean, self-contained, verifiable links. **Recommended artefacts:**

- Architecture diagrams
- Demo videos
- Dashboard screenshots
- Model evaluation reports
- Patent disclosures
- Blogs or press mentions supporting impact

Zinnov-Tip:

Attach only high-quality artefacts that directly validate your claims — not broad folders.

SECTION E – Future Potential & Scalability

Keep this section strategic, directional, and realistic.

Include:

- Near-term roadmap (6–12 months)
- Opportunities for cross-functional or multi-geo adoption
- Scalability across platforms or business lines
- Evolution of the model/architecture
- Reusability as enterprise-wide capability

Leadership:

Focus on enterprise scaling, governance, operating model, talent and maturity uplift.

IC:

Focus on next-gen technical enhancements, model evolution, efficiency, or modularization.

FINAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- Track selected appropriately (Leadership vs IC)
- Responses follow Zinnov’s recommended flow:
 - Problem → Innovation → Individual Contribution → Impact → Evidence
- All metrics quantified with timeframes
- No generic claims: every statement is factual and specific
- Individual contribution differentiated from team contribution
- No duplication across sections
- All links validated
- Language is concise, consulting-grade, and outcome-oriented
- Differentiator clearly articulated
- Future potential realistic and aligned to organizational context