AI & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

POSTED BY
ZBIF
Zimbabwe Business Innovation Forum

Build an online ML competition platform that scores CSV submissions and ranks teams on a live leaderboard

ZBIF



A working web platform where participants upload a CSV of their model's predictions, get an automatic accuracy score against a hidden answer file and see their rank on a live leaderboard.

POSTED BY	**ZBIF**	PILOT BUDGET	**Agreed once a team is matched**
LOCATION	**Online, open to teams across Zimbabwe**	APPLICATIONS CLOSE	**15 Dec 2026**
SUB-THEME	**AI & Digital Transformation**	TEAM SIZE	**Any size**

1 The problem

Background

ZBIF wants to run machine learning competitions where participants download a dataset, build models and submit their predictions. To do this, ZBIF needs its own competition platform. The expected flow is simple: an organiser creates a competition and uploads a training set, a test set and a hidden solution CSV with the correct answers. Participants register, form teams and upload a CSV of their predictions for the test set. The platform checks the file, compares it row by row with the solution CSV, calculates a score based on accuracy, saves the result and updates a leaderboard that ranks every team by its best score.

What's going wrong

ZBIF has no platform for running ML competitions. Scoring prediction files by hand is slow, error-prone and cannot give participants instant feedback or a live ranking. Without automatic checks, badly formatted files, mismatched row IDs and missing values break scoring. Without proper controls, the hidden answer file could leak, teams could create multiple accounts to get extra submissions, or overfit to a public score. External competition sites give ZBIF less control over its data, users and branding. ZBIF needs a secure, reusable platform it owns and can run for any competition.

2 What we need

A strong solution will:

- ✓ Competition management: give organisers a dashboard to create competitions, set opening and closing dates, upload datasets, define the required submission schema and publish rules
- ✓ Store the hidden solution CSV separately from participant files, encrypted at rest and accessible only to the scoring service
- ✓ Team and access controls: require account registration with a verified email address
- ✓ Let each user create or join one team per competition, with organiser controls for exceptions
- ✓ Apply submission limits (a fixed daily cap and a total cap per competition) and keep a full submission audit trail
- ✓ Validation: check file name and type, column names, row count, unique IDs, ID alignment with the test set, missing values, duplicate rows and prediction format before scoring
- ✓ Return clear, actionable validation errors that never reveal solution data
- ✓ Scoring: score only valid files against the hidden answers, with accuracy as the default metric, and record the score, timestamp, competition, team and submission version
- ✓ Leaderboard: rank teams by their best valid score, showing team name, rank, best score and last-updated time, without exposing individual predictions
- ✓ Use a public leaderboard for feedback and a hidden final evaluation set (private leaderboard) to decide final winners and reduce overfitting

Constraints

- The solution CSV must never be downloadable, inferable or exposed through the website, API, logs or error messages
- Solution files are encrypted at rest and only the scoring service can read them
- Scoring must run automatically and return a result within seconds for typical file sizes
- One verified account per person and one team per user per competition, unless an organiser grants an exception
- Personal data handled under the Cyber and Data Protection Act (Chapter 12:07)
- Mobile-friendly pages that work on low bandwidth
- Built with open-source tools; no per-user licence fees
- Hosted on ZBIF-approved infrastructure, with full source code handed over to ZBIF

3 Deliverables

By forum week, matched teams are expected to bring:

01	Working platform covering competition management, team and access controls, validation, scoring and leaderboards
02	Pilot acceptance: an organiser can create a competition and upload all three required datasets (training, test and hidden solution)
03	Pilot acceptance: a participant can register, join a team, submit a correctly formatted prediction CSV and receive an automatic accuracy score
04	Pilot acceptance: invalid, incomplete or ID-mismatched CSVs are rejected with actionable messages
05	Pilot acceptance: the leaderboard updates after a valid submission and keeps only each team's best score for ranking
06	Pilot acceptance: participants cannot download, infer or access the hidden solution file
07	Pilot acceptance: submission caps and account and team rules are enforced and logged
08	Source code, deployment guide and user documentation

4 How teams are evaluated

Applications and final pitches are scored by the challenge owner and the ZBIF secretariat.

CRITERION	WHAT WE LOOK AT	WEIGHT
Fit to the problem	Does it solve the problem as the challenge owner describes it?	**30%**
Technical feasibility	Can the team build and run it with the resources available?	**25%**
Cost and scalability	Is it affordable to pilot, and to roll out if the pilot works?	**20%**
Team capability	Does the team have the skills and time to deliver?	**15%**
Local impact	Jobs, skills or value it keeps in Zimbabwe.	**10%**

Who can apply

- ✓ A registered ZBIF innovator account: innovators, consultancies, technologists, university teams or freelancers.
- ✓ At least one team member based in Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Able to attend the event at the challenge location if shortlisted.
- ✓ IP ownership and pilot terms are agreed between your team and the challenge owner in the Deal Room.

5 Timeline

25 Nov 2026	Challenge posted
15 Dec 2026	Applications close
As responses arrive	Each response is screened and ranked for the challenge owner

6 Data and resources

Shared with matched teams after signing a simple data-use agreement.

Sample competition dataset	Training, test and solution CSVs for building and testing the scorer
Example submission files	Valid and invalid CSVs for testing upload checks
Requirements walkthrough	With the ZBIF team at kick-off
Build reviews	Regular check-ins with Smile Factory

7 How to apply

01 Create a free innovator account at **zbif.co.zw**, or sign in.

02 Open this challenge (ref ZB-36) and press **Apply**.

03 Tell us your team name, size and how you would solve the problem. Applications close on **15 Dec 2026**.

Questions about the brief can be asked from the challenge page. Answers are shared with every applicant.

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