



Press Release

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Young Innovators Shine at NCC Hackathon, Showcase Accessible Technology Solutions

SORA emerged as the overall winner of the Fourth Edition of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) Hackathon Live Show 2026, clinching the 3 million Naira grand prize, while Clear Signal and IKOR secured second and third places, receiving 2 million Naira and 1 million Naira respectively in a competition designed to develop innovative technology solutions for persons with disabilities and other underserved communities.

The top three teams received cash prizes, while all participating teams received consolation prizes and certificates of participation for their contributions to advancing digital inclusion and accessible technology development.

The winning teams were announced at the conclusion of the two-day event, which brought together young innovators from across the country to develop technology-driven solutions aimed at expanding digital participation and supporting inclusive economic growth. The top three teams received cash prizes in recognition of their outstanding innovations, while all participating teams were presented with consolation prizes and certificates of participation.

The winning solution, SORA, is an inclusive job-matching and adaptive skills platform designed for verified persons with disabilities in Nigeria, helping to connect users with employment opportunities and skills development resources. Clear Signal, which placed second, enables blind, visually impaired, deaf, and hard-of-hearing electricity consumers to receive accessible power outage alerts through voice calls, text messages, and visual notifications.

IKOR, the third-placed solution, is an AI-powered voice dictation and writing tool designed to overcome barriers associated with expensive hardware, poor internet connectivity, and physical typing. Participants welcomed the opportunity to showcase their innovations on a national platform and receive feedback from industry stakeholders.

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The Hackathon, themed “Technology Without Barriers,” brought together 20 teams comprising innovators, software developers, entrepreneurs, researchers, students, and persons with disabilities to develop practical technology-driven solutions aimed at expanding accessibility and digital inclusion.

Dr. Aminu Maida, Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the NCC, said the Commission remains committed to leveraging innovation to address digital exclusion and ensure that all Nigerians, particularly persons with disabilities and underserved communities, can participate meaningfully in the digital economy.

Speaking on behalf of the EVC, Rimini Makama, Executive Commissioner, Stakeholder Management (ECSM), described young Nigerian innovators as a critical resource for the nation's future growth, stating that, “Nigeria’s next major oil field is not buried under our soil or offshore in the Atlantic Ocean. It is here, in the ideas, ingenuity, brilliance and determination of the young Nigerians gathered in this room today.

Maida noted that barriers such as the cost of devices, inadequate digital skills, limited access to assistive technologies and poor accessibility features on some digital platforms continue to hinder digital participation. Emphasizing the importance of inclusive innovation, he stated that, “Technology should not create new barriers; at its best, technology should remove them.” He added that Hackathon serves as a strategic platform for developing practical solutions that address accessibility challenges and support the Commission's vision of a digitally inclusive society.

Highlighting the economic value of accessible technology, the EVC remarked that, “When we design assistive and accessible technologies, we are unlocking massive untapped markets, expanding consumer participation, and bringing millions of hardworking Nigerians into the formal economy as creators, entrepreneurs, and confident digital citizens.” He encouraged investors, telecommunications operators, and other stakeholders to support the commercialization of promising innovations emerging from the programme.

Earlier at the opening ceremony, Rimini Makama, represented by Usman Malah, Director, Zonal Operations, said the Hackathon reflects the Commission's commitment to building an inclusive digital society where technology creates opportunities for everyone. She stressed that “the true measure of technological

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advancement lies not only in the sophistication of our innovations, but in the extent to which they improve lives, expand opportunities, and empower every member of society to participate meaningfully in the digital economy.” She further urged participants to develop solutions that are affordable, scalable, user-friendly, and impactful, reminding them that “the greatest innovations are those that remove obstacles, create opportunities, and empower people to reach their full potential.”

Helen Obi, Director, Digital Economy Department, explained that the Hackathon was conceived to promote indigenous innovation while advancing digital inclusion and universal access. She disclosed that participating teams developed solutions addressing accessibility challenges in healthcare, education, emergency communications, accessible USSD services, AI-powered sign language translation, voice-enabled services, and assistive technologies for visually impaired users. She also highlighted the Commission's indigenous NCC Hackathon Judge Software, developed to automate and standardize the judging process.

In a goodwill message, Chinyelu Chikwendu, Senior Manager, Strategy and Innovation at MTN Nigeria, commended the NCC for what she described as “a regulator with a difference” that not only provides oversight for the industry but also actively supports the growth of the digital ecosystem. She particularly praised Hackathon’s focus on people with disabilities and reaffirmed MTN's commitment to supporting innovation, startups and solutions that improve lives.

Also delivering a goodwill message, Eneh Omawumi, Head of the Gender Desk Unit at the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology, commended the NCC for promoting innovation, empowerment, and inclusion through Hackathon. She praised the fairness of the competition and encouraged participants to continue developing their ideas.

Similarly, Amadi Kenneth of the Consumer Protection and Financial Inclusion Department, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), described the Hackathon as a worthwhile initiative, noting that several of the solutions presented have strong potential to deepen financial inclusion for women, youths, persons with disabilities and underserved communities. He further expressed the CBN's willingness to collaborate with the NCC and innovators from the programme to leverage some of the solutions in driving digital and financial inclusion across the country.

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Maida commended the Commission's technical partners, mentors, judges, and stakeholders for their contributions and reiterated the NCC's commitment to strengthening indigenous content development, supporting local technology ecosystems, and ensuring that the benefits of the digital economy are accessible to all Nigerians.

Signed:

Mrs. Nnenna Ukoha
Director, Public Affairs Department
Nigerian Communications Commission

August 30, 2026



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