

# Innovator Trust unveils 2023 SMME Women in Tech Award recipients

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Leading advocate for tech entrepreneurship and ICT SMMEs, Innovator Trust proudly announced the distinguished winners of the 2023 Women in Tech Awards...

This prestigious recognition celebrates the remarkable achievements of women who have made outstanding contributions and demonstrated innovation, resilience, and exceptional growth within their Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).

In a spectacular, jam-packed programme led by broadcasters Azania Mosaka, Leanne Manas and Zuraida Jardine, the award ceremony held on Thursday, 16th November 2023 at the grand Vodacom World venue in the vibrant city of Johannesburg, showcased the exceptional accomplishments of the Innovator Trust Women in Tech Award recipients.

Tashline Jooste, chief executive officer of Innovator Trust, delivered a visionary address, emphasizing the transformative power of technology in Africa and the pivotal role women play in driving this change. Her commitment to impactful small business development and empowering entrepreneurs has been a driving force behind the success of Innovator Trust.

## **Awards Galore: Recognising Top Achievers**

The heart of the event was the acknowledgment of outstanding women who have made remarkable strides in the tech landscape. From the Supplier Development Top Female Achiever Highest Percentage Growth to the Enterprise Development Female Pinnacle Award, the ceremony recognized women entrepreneurs who have not only demonstrated excellence but have also paved the way for others in the industry.

## **Quarterly excellence and employment creation**

Innovator Trust also shone a spotlight on quarterly excellence, applauding Unathi Nuku for her exceptional achievements in Quarter 1 of 2023. Additionally, Temo Digital's Wahseema and Nicole Miller received the top Enterprise Development Top Female Employment Creator award.

## **Youth Entrepreneurship Program: Nurturing future leaders**

The event also celebrated the young talents nurtured through the Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP). Bongeka Ntshangase emerged as the Top Female Achiever in the YEP, showcasing the promising future of tech entrepreneurship in South Africa.

## **Pinnacle Awards: Recognising exceptional leadership**

The prestigious Pinnacle Awards, presented in collaboration with Vodacom, crowned Lilian Kistan of Tekwecomm from KZN and Joburg's own Katlego Malatji of ProjectONE Engineering as the Supplier Development and Enterprise Development Female Pinnacle Award recipients, respectively. These awards symbolise exceptional leadership, innovation, and a commitment to creating positive change in the tech sector.

Thabile Makhoba of Makhoba Professional Services, Wahseema Miller and Nicole Miller of Temo Digital, Unathi Nuku of New Era IT, Katlego Malatji of Project ONE Engineering, Bongeka Ntshangase, Lilian Kistan of Tekwecomm – these names echoed through the venue as they stood out among the impressive pool of nominees.

## **Full list of Women In Tech 2023 winners**

### **Vodacom Innovator Trust Supplier Development Top Female Achiever Highest Percentage Growth 2022/23**

Thabile Makhoba, Makhoba Professional Services

### **Top Female Achiever Highest Percentage Growth 2022/23**

**1st place** - Wahseema Miller and Nicole Miller, Temo Digital

**2nd place** - Nompomelelo Mahlangu, Synergy Trading & Projects

**3rd place** - Leslen Ash and Maryse Monmarche, iTechnology Africa

### **Enterprise Development Top Female Achiever Quarter 1 2023**

**1st place** - Unathi Nuku, New Era IT

**2nd place** - Joanne Madavha, Diamonds For Africa Consulting

**3rd place** - Leigh Desai, Innativ Studio

### **Enterprise Development Top Female Employment Creator 2022/23**

Wahseema Miller and Nicole Miller, Temo Digital

### **Enterprise Development Top Female Achiever YTD Turnover 2022/23 Winner**

Wahseema Miller and Nicole Miller, Temo Digital

### **Youth Entrepreneurship Programme Top Female Achiever 2023**

Bongeka Ntshangase

### **Vodacom Innovator Trust Supplier Development Female Pinnacle Award 2022/23 Winner**

Lilian Kistan, Tekwecomm

### **Innovator Trust Enterprise Development Female Pinnacle Award 2022/23 Winner**

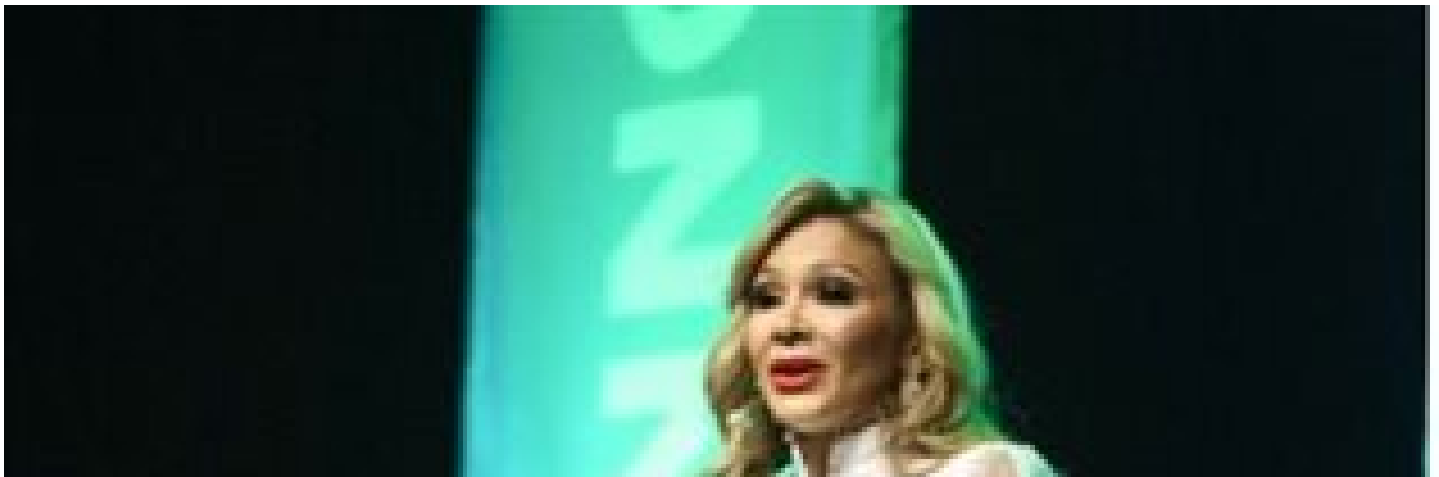
Katlego Malatji, Projectone Engineering

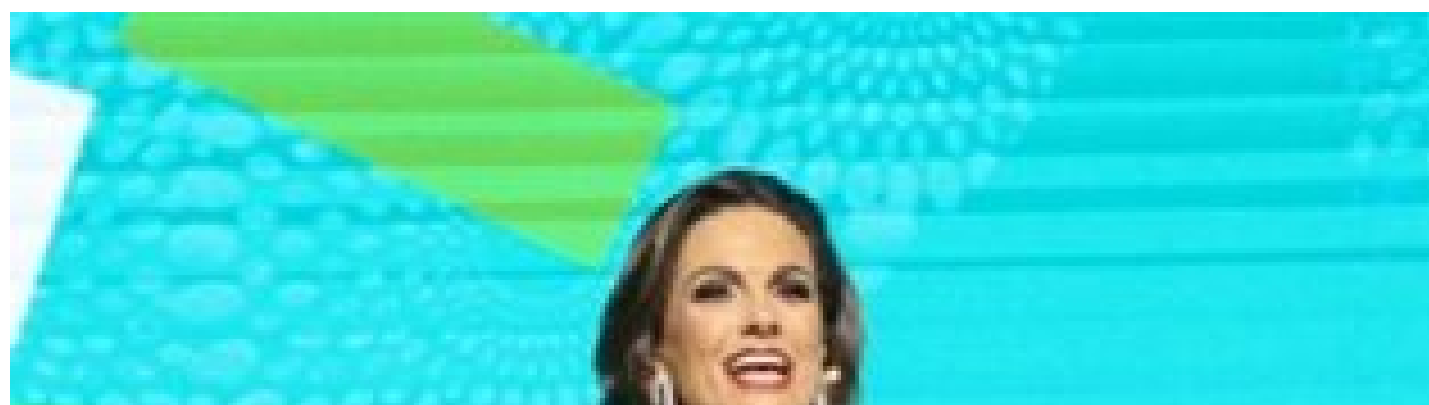


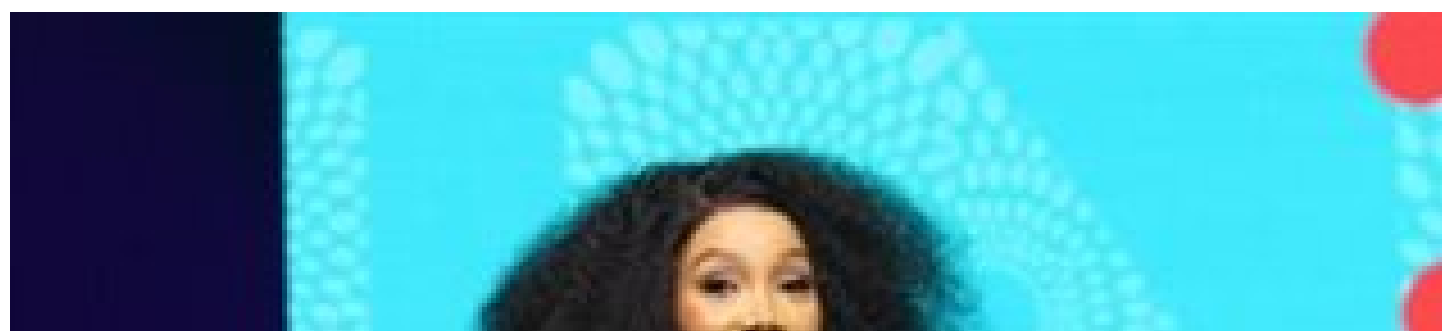
Nominees across the category were celebrated for their leadership impact, diversification and growth in revenue within their business in the technology sector. The Innovator Trust remains committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, and these awards highlight the organisation's dedication to recognising and empowering women in the South African tech ecosystem.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage with innovative SMMEs through exhibitions, participate in activations, and capture memorable moments at the red carpet and VOGUE photo booth.

**“Technology in the hands of women is a powerful tool, giving women a unique and newfound sense of empowerment. We are thrilled to shine a spotlight on these outstanding women who have not only contributed significantly to the tech industry but have also played a pivotal role in paying it forward to the next generation of women in STEM”,** stated Innovator Trust CEO Tashline Jooste and added, **“Technology is not just a tool; it is the driving force behind a revolution of empowerment, a SHEVOLUTION and these women are at the forefront of it!”**









The Innovator Trust Women in Tech Experience serves as a platform to inspire and motivate aspiring women in the technology sector, fostering a culture of innovation and inclusivity among women within South African SMMEs.

**The SHEVOLUTION Experience** 2023 was more than an awards ceremony, it was a holistic experience; celebrating resilience, innovation, and the collective power of women in shaping the future of technology.

As the curtains closed on this empowering event, the impact of these women on the tech landscape will undoubtedly reverberate for years to come. The attention then turned to the future. The announcement of the 2024 cohort of SMMEs joining the prestigious Innovator Trust iTap Accelerator program added a forward-looking dimension to the celebration. These SMMEs, carefully selected for their potential for rapid growth, represent the next wave of innovators set to make their mark in the tech industry.

For more information, visit the Innovator Trust website or follow the updates on the official social media channels below.

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#### **The Innovator Trust**



The Innovator Trust was created to support the growth of small black-owned Information and Communications Technology (ICT) businesses in South Africa. Our programmes facilitate training that develops their skills as business owners.

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