



## **Robotics ideas for trade and small businesses: These are the finalists of the KUKA Innovation Award 2024**

**Augsburg, January 18, 2024 - Robotics for bakeries, bending processes or clothing companies: In the current round of the KUKA Innovation Award, creativity in robotics for trade and SMEs is in demand. The three final teams have now been selected. They will present their ideas at the Hannover Messe in April - the winner will receive €20,000 in prize money.**

What challenges in craft businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can robots solve? What new interactive applications are possible? How can robotics and automation contribute to the transformation of these sectors and help solve challenges such as the shortage of skilled workers and rising costs? KUKA's annual innovation competition in 2024 is based on the motto "Robots for the People", in the context of which KUKA wants to make robotics and automation easily accessible to everyone.

Research teams and young entrepreneurs from all over the world were invited to submit creative and innovative ideas on collaborative robotics for small and medium-sized enterprises. The aim of the challenge: to develop innovative applications, technologies and software based on the KUKA cobot LBR iisy and the iiQKA robot operating and ecosystem.

The jury decided on these three final teams:

### **Team YANTRA | DLR/Reverie and NHDC | Germany/India**

In countries like India, Japan, Indonesia etc., the consumer textiles sector is characterized by traditional craftsmanship in a Micro-Small-Medium scale Enterprise (MSME) setup, which is under pressure from non-customized manufacturing. Yantra is developing an LBR iisy robot apprentice to assist with skilled tasks in sustainable handloom textiles within a micro factory setup to decrease

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production times, while preserving the creative aspect of the craft. Within the team, the members from the Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) are working on collaborative robotics to provide customized robot programming, which will be augmented with a language-to-motion framework developed in collaboration with Reverie Language Technologies (RLT). The National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC), India, will consult the project on the crafts processes.

## **Team Collaborative Deliciousness | University of Waterloo | Canada**

The IISYest baker is the user-friendly automated solution for small-medium artisanal bakeries based on iiQKA and the KUKA iisy robot. It will feature an intuitive user interface that bakers can easily use to replace the thousands of repetitive tasks that are currently done manually. The goal is to enhance production efficiency, reduce labor costs, provide scalability, and most importantly, ensure consistent product quality that is the same as artisan bakers. This solution has the potential for a positive economic impact and can be easily implemented in different craft bakery settings.

## **Team Ricobb | LVD Robotic Solutions bv + KU Leuven | Belgium**

Ricobb empowers European small and medium-sized companies by providing a Reliable iisy Cobot Buddy to retrieve manufacturing industry out of low wage countries. That's the ambitious goal of LVD Robotic Solutions and Acro research group. The concept focuses on the development of a user-friendly cobot application platform, tangible brought into practice for a bending process, supported by a broad end customer fan club. Intelligent robot programming by using easy modules, easily accessible and adaptable to the bending process (defined by the LVD press), including methods and building blocks for product families. Initiated for bending, but without ignoring the deployment of the solution for other related applications like sorting or deburring.

### Here's what happens next:

The finalists will present their ideas to the public in regular demonstrations from April 22 to 26, 2024 at the Hannover Messe in Hall 5, Stand D12. On Thursday, April 25 at 11 a.m., the jury will then select the winner of the €20,000 Innovation Award directly at the trade fair stand.



## KUKA

KUKA is a global automation corporation with sales of around 4 billion euro and around 15,000 employees. The company is headquartered in Augsburg, Germany. As one of the world's leading suppliers of intelligent automation solutions, KUKA offers customers everything they need from a single source. From robots and cells to fully automated systems and their connectivity in markets such as automotive with a focus on e-mobility & battery, electronics, metal & plastic, consumer goods, e-commerce, retail and healthcare.