

NASA SPACE APPS PROJECT ACCELERATOR TOOLKIT

DESIGNED FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

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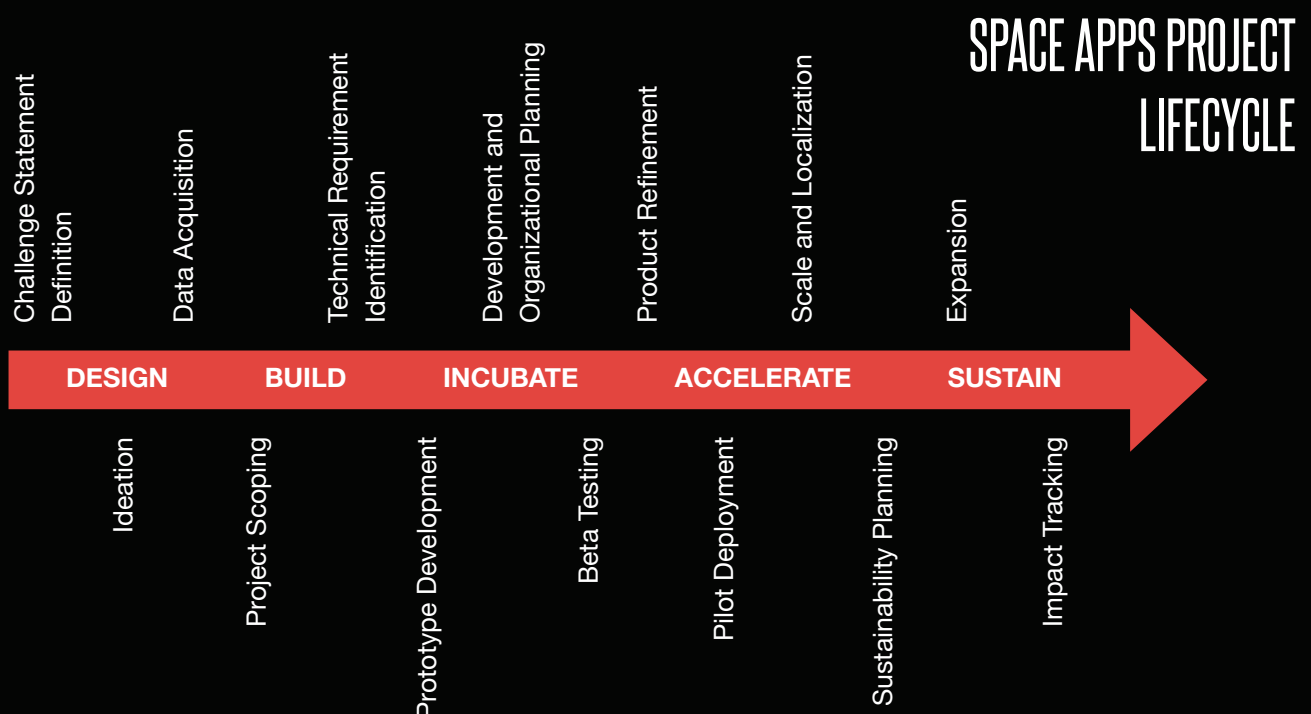
INTRODUCTION

Every year, thousands of space geeks, technologists, and subject matter experts around the world come together to make NASA's International Space Apps Challenge one of the biggest hackathons on the planet. Participants create hundreds of unique, innovative, and potentially ground-breaking projects. Without you, Space Apps wouldn't happen. We turn to you, again, to keep the innovation pipeline flowing beyond the annual Space Apps event.

After the weekend event, many Space Apps teams with promising solutions need guidance and support to move beyond the codeathon environment. We want innovation to take root in communities around the planet, planted from the seeds of NASA's open data. We recognize the need to bridge the gap between idea and action; therefore, we pulled together some guidelines to help you accelerate the project ideas generated within your community.

NASA offers this new Space Apps Project Accelerator Toolkit as a resource for you, the local organizers, to create your own community-based Space Apps incubation movement, which will vary greatly by location depending on your needs and interests. This new toolkit offers guidelines to help you create innovation, incubation, and acceleration opportunities within your community, in order to extend the innovation lifecycle throughout the year.

This is your toolkit. We provide you the benefit of our acceleration experience. You, the local host, are in a unique position to leverage the resources in your community — local businesses, nonprofits, or universities — to incubate or accelerate great ideas and projects created around NASA data and tools that you feel have the most promise.

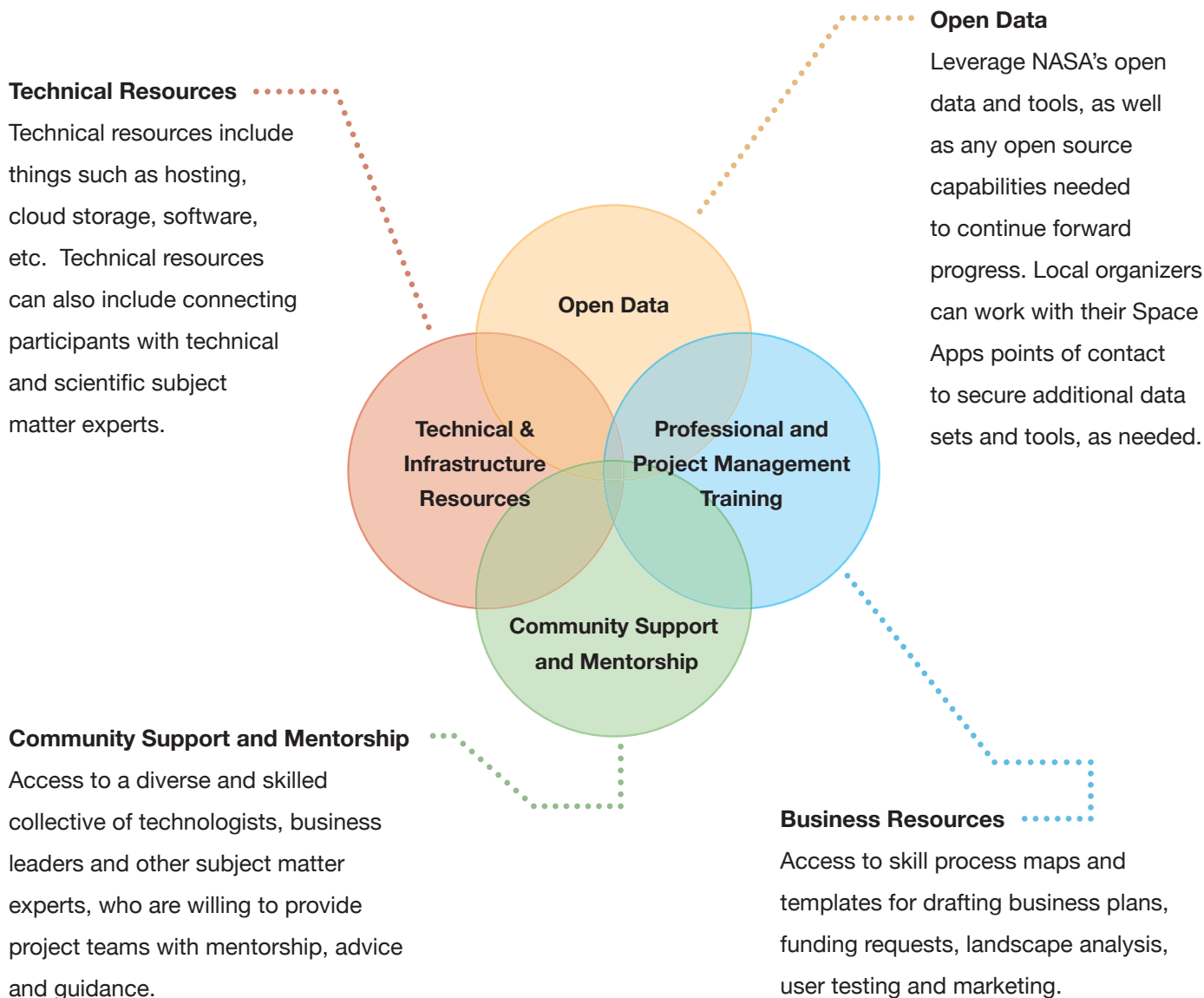


FUNDAMENTALS OF INCUBATION

For teams looking to maintain momentum with their projects following the annual Space Apps event, the first 6 to 12 months are critical. Project teams may need community support, such as access to equipment or technology, office or lab space, business management planning, mentorship, funding, or more. Team members may be looking for ways to use the skills they demonstrated at Space Apps to transition into data-related jobs. Think about how you can connect top-notch teams to the resources they need.

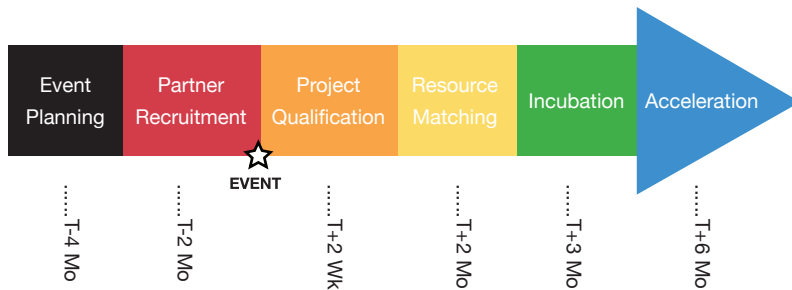
As you create your incubation opportunities, please consider four key resource areas.

SPACE APPS RESOURCE TYPES



GETTING STARTED

TIMELINE



The Space Apps Challenge weekend serves as the kickoff to a new acceleration capability in your community. Your work to recruit support for a local Space Apps Project Accelerator will occur in the months prior to and after Space Apps weekend.

Due to the duration and effort required to offer support to teams beyond Space Apps weekend, we think you will need at least two more volunteers on your team to handle the extra workload. We offer a sample timeline for you to modify, based on your unique program design.

SPACE APPS PROJECT ACCELERATOR TEAM LEVEL OF EFFORT

HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the progress of projects. Recruit and manage collaborator relationships. Broker needs assessment and resource matching tasks. Follow up with teams four times per year.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage team/sponsor relationships following the event. Connect the local community with available resource partners. Assist teams with needs finding and other project management tasks. Follow up with teams twice per year.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform attendees and collaborators about the Space Apps Community. Encourage self-directed incubation activities. Distribute the Space Apps Accelerator toolkit to promising project teams. Encourage community members to stay involved after Space Apps weekend.

Local incubation requires leadership at the local level, along with community-based collaborative partnerships. You will want to put together a solid team of enthusiastic volunteers with a different range of skills, just as you do with your Space Apps planning team. This is your opportunity to grow the innovation network in your community, and to help us continue to harvest the seeds of NASA data beyond the Space Apps weekend.

If you choose to create a community acceleration capability, your team will broker relationships between the project teams and interested community organizations that can provide support. Your efforts to recruit accelerator collaborators will happen in tandem with your Space Apps event planning. You should plan your incubation program according to the time and bandwidth of your local organizing team.

This toolkit offers you options. We recognize that each Space Apps team has access to different capabilities within your community to support innovation incubation efforts. We know you face unique barriers, and have varying levels of enthusiasm for open source innovation. We appreciate your willingness to take this risk – by attempting to create acceleration capabilities for the Space Apps project teams.

When considering which organizations to approach as collaborators, remember to look into non-technical resource providers, co-working spaces, technology companies, and existing accelerators. To the extent possible, share resources with other Space Apps teams that are working on local acceleration efforts along side you. You're all super awesome. We'd love for you to help each other. To the extent you can, share cloud-based infrastructure, original content, and best practices. You and your team are part of the innovation ecosystem that Space Apps is intended to spark.



SELECTING PROJECTS



Now that you have your collaborating organizations lined up, you need to let your project teams know you'll be selecting promising teams for acceleration. Make sure you know how many teams you can support in the next three, six, nine months following the Space Apps Challenge event.

You'll want to inform participants at your Space Apps location that they're eligible for local incubation. You will need to decide which projects you want to accelerate. You may offer incubation as a prize. Perhaps you start with one project team for the first year. You can let your local judges select the most worthy candidate for acceleration. Or, you may want to look at the top candidates selected by your judging team and decide what your collaborators have to offer before you choose which team moves forward into the acceleration process.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH POTENTIAL SPACE APPS PROJECTS AND TEAMS

The project has a clearly defined user and use case.

Open data sets relevant to the project are available and accessible.

The project has potential for social, scientific, or economic success.

The team consists of 3+ people. At least 2 are developers.

Team members are personally passionate about the project.

Members of the project team get along, and are in agreement about the project's goals.

SAMPLE PROJECT SELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do team members get along and work well together?
2. Has the team created a working prototype that clearly demonstrates the purpose of the application?
3. Does a market for the product or service exist?
4. Does the team have a business plan and/or funding?
5. Can this team build a sustainable business or organization?
6. How well does the project align with the resource collaborators' focus areas?
7. Will additional community support and resources accelerate the growth of the product?
8. Is the team willing and able to leverage opportunities for connections, resources, and visibility?
9. What is the product's potential for social, scientific, or economic impact?

Sample Eligibility [feel free to adapt to your community needs]

Project members must be at least 18 years old. Projects solutions that are poised to “go to market”, in early stages of delivery or with a clear technology or business model will receive the most benefit from acceleration. Projects should have a prototype - a “looks-like” or “works-like” model - that clearly demonstrates the value of the product, as well as a 30 second project video, website, team biographies, and vision for how move forward.

Facilitating connections between resource collaborators and project teams is one of the most important tasks your team will undertake. Be professional. Broker open and productive communication between project teams and resource providers. The conversations may be complex. You will need to ensure a level of quality control on the collaborative relationships.

Document mutually agreed upon performance standards and codes of conduct in order to reduce the perceived risk of partnering with newly formed project teams. Remember, many Space Apps project

teams come together at the weekend event. The team members are still getting to know each other, and at the same time, learning to work together with resource collaborators.

Establish clear guidelines stating community standards for individual conduct, financial reporting, and communications. You and your team have the opportunity to determine the guidelines governing innovation incubation in your local community. Be sure to leverage existing innovation networks in your community, whenever possible.

MATCHING RESOURCES WITH TEAMS

Once you select promising Space Apps project teams, you can begin assisting them as they develop a work plan outlining the gap between where they are and where they want to go in the incubation process.

We included a work plan template in this toolkit as a starting place. You should reach out to experts in the tech startup and business development fields to seek out additional templates, best practices, and peer-to-peer support. Clearly align goals and expectations between your team, the project team members, and your resource collaborators by documenting accelerator work plans, resource needs and provisions, and non-confidential communications.

We recommended someone on your team meet with every accelerator project team at least once during the needs assessment and planning phase. Your team should decide how often you meet — depending on their project and team maturity. Some teams may need more attention than others. Your team should document the goals, needs, and progress of each project team.

Though you'll be ready to take a break after the highly intensive (and rewarding) Space Apps Challenge

weekend, your team will be busy with your selected accelerator project teams. In the following six weeks, your team will provide direct support to project teams — developing a needs assessment and work plan, and matching the needs to pledged support by resource collaborators. You may also want to bring in additional organizations to fill in the gaps based on specific needs of the project teams you've selected.

NASA's Space Apps team is working with collaborators willing to provide global resources to you. We will provide a resource directory as organizations offer support. You are free to contact them directly if you see a match for your community or your specific project teams. If your local collaborators would like to be listed in the directory, we'd love to include them. Contact the Space Apps Community Manager if you have any questions.

Please note that our global team is small. We can't manage the accelerator process for you, but we'll be as helpful as we can, time permitting. NASA does not have funding to support individual project teams, but we're investing in you through the creation of this guidebook.

SAMPLE RESOURCE MATCHING WORKSHEET

[Project Name]

[Contact Information]

[Affiliated Event]	Priority Level	Resource Provider	Status	Notes
1 [Project Team Need]				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Team Resource Utilization Strategy:

Missing Resources:

SAMPLE PROJECT WORK PLAN

[Project Name]

[Contact Information]

[Affiliated Event]

Months 1-2

Month 3

Months 4-5

Month 6

1	[Strategic Focus Area]	[Tasks & Deliverables]				
			Months 1-2	Month 3	Months 4-5	Month 6
2						
3						
4						
5						

Work Plan Summary:

Notes:

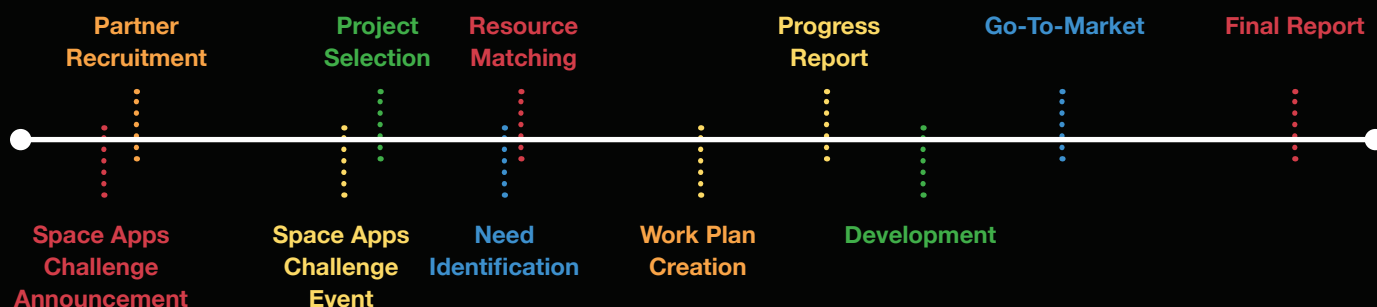
PROGRESS TRACKING

Once you connect your project teams with the resources and guidance they need to progress forward, your role shifts from facilitator to monitor. As teams move through the incubation process, please document their progress (and barriers). Determine regular updates – once a week, once a month, or quarterly – to ensure project teams have what they need, or if they need strategic course corrections.

Data collected about the barriers, action levers, best practices, and lessons learned on a local level will serve as the basis for the continued refinement and expansion of this program globally. In order to reduce the burden of detailed record keeping and manual data collation, we recommend that organizers encourage teams to at a minimum use their Space Apps Challenge project page to share status updates semi-annually. To ensure the frequency and quality of self-reporting, you may outline policies on the type and frequency of project team progress reports.

NASA's Space Apps team would love connect you with other accelerator teams so that you can collaborate on best practices. Your experiences will help us evolve this toolkit for future Space Apps team. Perhaps we can host a Space Apps Challenge using your incubator data, in terms of processes and outcomes, to develop tools and insights to build upon your innovation incubation capabilities.

TIMELINE





GET INVOLVED

We offer this guidebook as our way of thanking you for your efforts in making Space Apps a success. You represent us in your local community, and we want your incubation efforts to flourish, based on the seeds of NASA's open data. But, it won't happen if you don't take the next step. Contact NASA's Space Apps Community Manager to indicate your interest.

You can learn more about the **NASA International Space Apps Challenge** at www.spaceappschallenge.org



Space Apps is a NASA incubator innovation program.

