Participant FAQ

Last Updated: 18 July 2024

WHAT IS THE NASA SPACE APPS CHALLENGE

The NASA International Space Apps Challenge is the largest annual global hackathon. This two-day event creates innovation through international collaboration by providing an opportunity for participants to utilize NASA's free and open data and its Space Agency Partners' space-based data to address real-world problems on Earth and in space.

During the hackathon, NASA Space Apps Challenge participants around the world gather at hundreds of in-person and virtual Local Events to address challenges submitted by NASA Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). These challenges range in complexity and topic, tasking participants with everything from creating artistic visualizations of NASA data to conceptualizing and developing informational apps and software programs. After the hackathon, project submissions are judged by space agency experts and winners are selected for one of 10 Global Awards.

The NASA Space Apps Challenge inspires collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Participants have gone on to form companies inspired by their projects, develop professional careers via employment opportunities or skill development, and network with like-minded individuals in their local community and around the world.

What is the theme of the 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge?

The 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge theme is "The Sun Touches Everything" in collaboration with [NASA Heliophysics](). This theme is in alignment with the [Heliophysics Big Year](), a global celebration of the Sun's influence on Earth and the entire solar system, as declared by NASA.

You can learn more about the 2024 theme on our [blog]().

How do I register to participate in the 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge?

Registration for the 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge opens on July 18 and will remain open through the end of the hackathon on October 6, 2024 (11:59 p.m. local time). To participate in the hackathon:

1. Create an account on spaceappschallenge.org
2. Register for the 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge
3. Choose an in-person or virtual Local Event or the virtual Universal Event

Participants must register individually, not as teams. Forming your team is a separate process.

Who can participate in the NASA Space Apps Challenge?

All ages, skill levels, and professional backgrounds are invited to participate in the NASA Space Apps Challenge! When you participate, you join a global community that embraces collaboration across borders, sectors, and cultures.

Whether you're a student, professional, technologist, engineer or artist, the NASA Space Apps Challenge offers opportunities for anyone with an interest in space and science.

What is the minimum age for participants?

The NASA Space Apps Challenge is open to all ages! However, participants who are under the age of 18 must be registered for the event by a parent or legal guardian and must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at all times during the event.

Does it cost anything to participate?

There is no cost to participate in the NASA Space Apps Challenge. If you are asked to pay money to participate in any aspect of a NASA Space Apps event, do not pay anything and please report to info@spaceappschallenge.org.

How can I connect with the NASA Space Apps community?

Follow us on X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to connect with your NASA Space Apps community! Share your excitement and hackathon journey using #SpaceApps.

Who are the 2024 Space Agency Partners?

The 2024 Space Agency Partners include the Australian Space Agency, Brazilian Space Agency, Canadian Space Agency, the Communications, Space & Technology Commission in Saudi Arabia**,** European Space Agency, Indian Space Research Organization, Italian Space Agency, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, Mexican Space Agency, National Space Activities Commission of Argentina, National Space Science Agency of Bahrain, Paraguayan Space Agency, South African National Space Agency, Spanish Space Agency, and the Turkish Space Agency.

IMPORTANT DATES

To stay informed on what's next in your hackathon journey, visit the **2024 Hackathon Page**. When logged into your account, you can see a personalized journey highlighting what steps you've already accomplished and what you still have left to do.

2024 HACKATHON PAGE

EVENT TIMELINE

July 2024

- Starting on July 18, 2024, register for the 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge and choose a Local Event or the Universal Event.

REGISTER HERE

- The 2024 Space Agency Partners are announced.
- Follow us on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) to connect with the NASA Space Apps community!
- Invite your friends to register for the NASA Space Apps Challenge. The hackathon experience is even better when shared with friends!
- Check your Messages inbox for important updates from the NASA Space Apps Global Organizing (GO) Team and your Local Leads.

August 2024

- On August 22, review the challenge summaries for a sneak peek of what's to come.
- Once you choose your challenge, begin forming your team.

September 2024

- Watch [Virtual Bootcamp video tutorials](#) to learn valuable information about the hackathon experience!
- Browse the challenge statements to read detailed information about the challenges.
- Review the step-by-step [Participant Guides](#) to prepare yourself for the hackathon.
- Join Space Apps Connect, a collaborative communication platform for the NASA Space Apps Challenge community.

October 4, 2024: Hackathon Kick Off

- Tune in to the Welcome to NASA Space Apps kick off video at 5:00 p.m. EST, featuring messages from special NASA guests.
- Global Collaborator Offers, optional free tools and resources that you can use to create your projects, are also released on this day.

October 5, 2024: First Day of the Hackathon

The hackathon begins at 9:00 a.m. (local time). Teams may begin working on their hackathon projects and project submission opens at this time. NASA Subject Matter Experts, Space Agency Partners, Local Leads, Navigators, and the GO Team will be available in Space Apps Connect to answer questions about the hackathon, challenges, and relevant data.

October 6, 2024: Second Day of the Hackathon

The hackathon ends at 11:59 p.m. (local time). All projects must be submitted to the NASA Space Apps Challenge website by this time or they will not be eligible for Global Judging.

October 2024: After the Hackathon

- Participant certificates are made available on the user Profile page ONLY for participants who submitted a project.
- The Registrant Survey is sent out to all hackathon registrants.
- The 2024 NASA Space Apps Challenge Infographic is released.
- Judging begins! Experts from NASA, Space Agency Partners, and industry leaders will evaluate the projects and select our Global Nominees.

November – December 2024

- Global and Executive judges will evaluate the projects submitted by the Global Nominees.
- Global Finalists and Honorable Mentions will be announced in November 2024.
- Executive Judging to determine the 10 Global Winners begins.

January 2025

- Global Winners are announced! Stay tuned for information on our Global Winners Announcement.
- The dates for the 2025 NASA Space Apps Challenge are announced.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

What are the Participant Guides?

Each year we provide step-by-step guides to help you navigate major milestones in your hackathon journey. We provide the following guides:

- **Team Formation Guide** *(Available August 22)*
- **Space Apps Connect Guide** *(Available September 23)*
- **Project Submission Guide** *(Available September 23)*
- **Judging and Awards Guide** *(Available September 23)*

All guides can be found on the [Resources page](#).

What is Virtual Bootcamp?

The [NASA Space Apps Virtual Bootcamp](#) is a series of video tutorials developed by NASA Space Apps Navigators, Global Winners, Space Agency Partners, Local Leads, Collaborators, and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). These videos provide tips for a successful hackathon experience and guidance regarding the challenges, supporting resources, and open data.

Videos will be posted from mid-July through October. You can find the Virtual Bootcamp on the Resources page and our [YouTube channel](#).

EXPLORE THE VIRTUAL BOOTCAMP

What is Space Apps Connect?

Space Apps Connect, hosted on GitHub, provides a platform for you to engage with the NASA Space Apps community and get valuable support for your hackathon journey. Space Apps Connect will open in late September and will remain open through October 6, 2024 (11:59 p.m. local time).

Along with your fellow participants, here is who you'll find in Space Apps Connect:

- **The NASA Space Apps Global Organizing (GO) Team**: The GO Team serves to guide and support Local Leads and participants throughout their NASA Space Apps experience and engage with members of the NASA Space Apps community year-round.
- **Local Leads**: Local Leads organize a Local Event for a specific city or town to participate in the NASA Space Apps Challenge.
- **Navigators**: Navigators are individuals who provide their expertise and experience with the NASA Space Apps Challenge and/or NASA's open data to help guide participants through their hackathon journeys.
- **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)**: SMEs author challenges and offer their help during the event by answering participant questions in real-time.
- **Global Collaborators:** Global Collaborators are companies or organizations that provide free tools and resources to NASA Space Apps Challenge participants to support the creation of their projects.

Find step-by-step instructions on how to navigate Space Apps Connect in our Space Apps Connect Guide. The guide will become available on September 23 on the [Resources page](#).

Is Space Apps Connect free?

Yes. Space Apps Connect is completely FREE for everyone to use.

When signing up for a GitHub account, GitHub will ask you which plan you would like to use. A FREE account will provide all of the capabilities you need to participate in the NASA Space Apps Challenge.

You do not need to make any monetary purchases to fully experience everything Space Apps Connect has to offer. If you are prompted or suggested to purchase something while using GitHub, please understand that **NASA is not responsible for any purchases you make**.

What should I do if I experience or witness discrimination, harassment, or any form of bullying during the hackathon?

We strive to ensure that NASA Space Apps is a place where all feel they belong, where all are comfortable being authentic, and where all are empowered to contribute to their fullest regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, race, disability, physical appearance, body size, age or religion.

If you experience or witness discrimination, harassment, or any form of bullying during the NASA Space Apps Challenge, or have any other concerns, please contact your Local Lead and/or the Space Apps Global Organizing (GO) Team at conduct@spaceappschallenge.org. The GO Team will take appropriate action, which may include warning or expelling offending participants from the event.

Read more about NASA Space Apps Values [on our About page](#).

CHOOSING A CHALLENGE

Challenges are developed by NASA Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and encompass a wide variety of topics from Earth and space science to the arts.

When and where will the challenges be published?

A summary of each challenge will be released on August 22, 2024. Full challenge statements, which include the full details, resources, and requirements, will become available closer to the start of the hackathon, in September. We encourage you to review each challenge statement and select one for your team project *before* the hackathon starts. Follow NASA Space Apps on social media ([X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#)) and check your Messages inbox to find out as soon as challenge summaries and challenge statements become available.

Can people start working on the challenges as soon as they are published?

We appreciate the enthusiasm of participants who want to start as early as possible. However, participants should NOT begin working on their project until the hackathon begins on October 5, 2024 (9:00 a.m. local time) to ensure a fair and equitable process.

Since the NASA Space Apps Challenge is held over the course of only two days, participants are not expected to submit a fully developed project at the end.

What if I have questions about one of the challenges or datasets?

Questions about challenges or supporting resources can be asked in Space Apps Connect in the week prior to and during the hackathon. NASA Space Apps Navigators and NASA Subject Matter Experts will be available to answer your challenge and data-related questions.

For information on how to access Space Apps Connect, please read our Space Apps Connect guide. The guide will become available on September 23, 2024 on the [Resources page](#).

Is it mandatory to pick one of the challenges? My team would like to come up with our own project.

To be eligible for Global Judging and Global Awards, teams must respond to one of the challenges. However, you have the option to select "Create Your Own Challenge" to develop a project based on your own idea, but projects submitted in this category will **not** be eligible for Global Awards.

Projects in the "Create Your Own Challenge" category may be eligible for Local Awards, which are specific to a Local Event. We encourage you to check with your Local Lead to determine if Local Awards are a part of your Local Event and if "Create Your Own Challenge" projects are eligible to receive a Local Award.

FORMING A TEAM

Part of the NASA Space Apps Challenge experience is connecting with like-minded problem solvers from your own community and around the world! Participants are encouraged to create teams that include individuals with diverse skill sets and backgrounds. A diverse team provides you with the opportunity to learn from one another and sets your team up for hackathon success.

Find step-by-step instructions on how to create or join a team in the Team Formation Guide. The guide will become available on August 22, 2024 on the [Resources page](#).

Do I need a team to participate?

Yes. While a participant is allowed to create a team and submit a project independently, we encourage all participants to be part of an actual team. We have found that the most successful projects come from teams of individuals with a variety of skills and backgrounds. For example, we encourage participants with non-technical backgrounds to connect with developers, designers, and people with scientific backgrounds to form a team.

How many members can be on a team?

Teams can be one to six people but the ideal size for a team is four to five people to balance skill sets. **No more than six people are allowed per team.**

When can I form or join a team?

You will be able to officially join or create a team on the NASA Space Apps website on August 22, 2024, when the challenge summaries are released. Identifying a challenge that interests you can be a helpful first step in forming or joining a team.

You may also wait to form your team until the hackathon. You may add members to your team until the hackathon ends on October 6, 2024 (11:59 p.m. local time).

Does it matter which team member officially creates the team?

Yes. One person from each team is responsible for creating and registering the team. That person is known as the "Team Owner." Please note that the Team Owner's Local Event will represent the team and will appear on the respective Local Event page.

The Local Event your team is associated with affects two things:

- **Project due date:** All projects must be submitted on October 6, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. (local time) in accordance with the Local Event for which your team is registered. *Please note: *If your team is registered for the Universal Event, your project must be submitted in accordance with the local time of the person who created the team.*
- **Project judging:** During the first round of judging, your team's project will be evaluated by the Local Judges at the Local Event for which your team is registered.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR TEAM OWNERS: Please make sure you fill in the "Team Owner Contact Information" field when creating your team. This will be the only way for new team members to get in contact with you through the NASA Space Apps website. Any information you put into this field will only be viewable by your team members - it will not be viewable to the public on the website.

How do I find teammates?

We encourage you to invite your friends and community members to participate with you! You can also find teams through:

- Your Local Lead, who may know other registered participants looking for teammates. Find the contact information for your Local Lead on your Local Event page.
- The Team Formation page
- Space Apps Connect, which will become available in late September.

Can I remove someone from my team, leave a team, or delete my team entirely?

Yes. You may remove yourself from a team by selecting the "Leave Team" option at the bottom of the page. This is also where Team Owners can approve/deny pending join requests or remove existing team members. Team Owners can also delete the team by clicking the red "Delete Team" at the bottom of the page.

If a Team Owner leaves a team, they will need to identify a new Team Owner for the team.

My team has decided to tackle a different challenge. However, we've already created our team page. What should we do?

If you've already created a team but have changed your mind about which challenge you want to tackle, you are welcome to pick a new challenge. The Team Owner can do this by choosing the blue "Edit Details" option on your team's About page.

PROJECT SUBMISSION

The purpose of the NASA Space Apps Challenge is to inspire innovative ideas and develop solution-oriented projects in a collaborative, team environment. Therefore, teams are not expected to submit a fully developed project at the end of the hackathon. We encourage all participants to submit what they accomplish over the course of the two-day event.

Find step-by-step instructions on how to submit your project in the Project Submission Guide. The guide will become available on September 23, 2024 on the [Resources page](#).

How are projects submitted?

Every team must create a project page on the NASA Space Apps website to describe the scope of its work. We encourage teams to create a project page as soon as the hackathon begins and to add information as the event progresses.

To be eligible for Global Judging, all team members must be registered for the hackathon, choose a Local Event or the Universal Event, and be identified on the team's project page.

When are project submissions due?

Project submission opens on October 5, 2024 at 9:00 a.m., in accordance with the local time of the Local Event for which your Team Owner is registered. At that time, your team will be able to edit your team's project page and submit your project on your team's project tab.

Project submission closes on October 6, 2024 at 11:59 p.m., in accordance with the local time of the Local Event for which your Team Owner is registered.

Exception: *If your team is registered for the Universal Event, project submission opens on October 5, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. and closes on October 6, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. in accordance with the local time of your Team Owner's* **area of residence.**

Check with your Local Lead if you have questions about the deadline for your Local Event's Local Judging and Local Awards.

What is expected in my project submission?

All project submission requirements are outlined in the [Project Submission Guide](). Use this guide to learn how to submit your project during the hackathon.

At a minimum, your project must respond to one of the official 2024 NASA Space Apps challenges and clearly show how the data resources provided within the challenge were used in your project.

Am I required to cite my sources?

Yes. You are required to cite all sources used in your project, including official sources that are listed on your challenge page and any other sources you decide to incorporate. If you are using any copyrighted materials, you must provide documented permission for use of those materials in your project.

Do I have to use code in my project?

Code is not a project submission requirement. The challenge you choose to work on may influence your decision to write code for your project.

Keep in mind that **NASA Space Apps Challenge hackathon projects are required to be open source**, which means the original content, including source code and any code your team develops, is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified.

RECOGNITION, JUDGING, & AWARDS

All NASA Space Apps Challenge participants who submitted a project will receive a certificate recognizing their participation shortly following the hackathon. Certificates can be found on the user Profile page for all participants for all teams who have successfully submitted a project.

Find detailed guidance on the Judging & Awards process in the Judging & Awards Guide. This guide will be available September 23, 2024 on the [Resources page](#).

Local Judging & Awards

Following the end of the hackathon, Local Leads and Local Judges complete the first round of judging to determine the Global Nominees, who will move forward in the Global Judging process.

Local Leads can also choose local winners during an optional pitch, feedback, or judging session for their Local Events. These sessions are distinct from the Global Nominee selection process.

For further inquiries, contact your Local Lead. If you have additional questions, email info@spaceappschallenge.org or connect with a member of the NASA Space Apps GO Team in Space Apps Connect.

Global Judging & Awards

All Global Nominees will be reviewed by a team of expert judges from NASA and NASA Space Apps Space Agency Partners to determine the Global Finalists and Honorable Mentions in mid-November. Once the Global Finalists are determined, the Global Winners will be announced January 2025, receiving a Global Award in one of ten categories:

- **Best Use of Science:** The project that makes the best and most valid use of science and/or the scientific method.
- **Best Use of Data:** The project that best makes space data accessible or leverages it for a unique application.
- **Best Use of Technology:** The project that exemplifies the most innovative use of technology.
- **Galactic Impact:** The project with the most potential to improve life on Earth or in the universe.
- **Best Mission Concept:** The project with the most plausible concept and design.
- **Most Inspirational:** The project that captures our hearts.
- **Best Storytelling Award:** The project that most creatively communicates the potential of open data through the art of storytelling.
- **Global Connection Award:** The project that best connects people around the world through technology.
- **Art & Technology Award:** The project that most effectively combines technical and creative skills.
- **Local Impact Award:** The project that demonstrates the greatest potential for local impact.

Please note that NASA reserves the right to change the Global Award categories at any time. The NASA Space Apps GO Team will update the NASA Space Apps community on social media and the website in advance of each step of the Global Judging process.

NASA Space Apps Winners Celebration

Winning teams and Local Lead of winning teams may receive an invitation to visit a NASA center or facility for a special NASA Space Apps Winners Celebration.

Winners Celebration invitees are responsible for arranging and financing their own travel, visas, meals, incidental expenses, and accommodations.

Winners' invitations and access to NASA facilities are subject to NASA security and United States regulatory screening and clearance.