



# JUDGING AND AWARDS GUIDE

*OCTOBER 2-3, 2021*

This guide is intended for participants of the **NASA International Space Apps Challenge 2021**. The instructions contained in this document require users to be signed up and registered for this specific event at [spaceappschallenge.org](https://spaceappschallenge.org).

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

If you have questions that are not addressed in this guide or in the other guides located on the Resources page ([spaceappschallenge.org/resources](https://spaceappschallenge.org/resources)), contact the Global Organizing (GO) Team at [info@spaceappschallenge.org](mailto:info@spaceappschallenge.org).

For technical assistance with any of the content in this document, email [web@spaceappschallenge.org](mailto:web@spaceappschallenge.org) with a specific description of your problem.

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## INTRODUCTION

You have the passion, the talent, and the knowledge – so how can you put it together to develop a winning Space Apps solution?

This guide walks you through the judging process and tells you about the 10 Global Awards that will be offered for Space Apps 2021. It also contains criteria that will be used by our judges, so read closely!

This year NASA is especially excited to emphasize its collaboration with nine additional space agencies! This includes the Australian Space Agency, Brazilian Space Agency, Canadian Space Agency, European Space Agency, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, National Space Activities Commission of Argentina, National Space Science Agency of Bahrain, Paraguayan Space Agency, and South African National Space Agency. These agencies will be providing data resources for the challenges. They will also be serving alongside NASA’s judges to evaluate the projects that make it to the Global Judging and Executive Judging stages. We hope you enjoy engaging with the data resources these agencies have provided and find creative ways to incorporate the data into your projects!

If you’re interested in creating a winning project, check out the Global Winners and Global Finalists from Space Apps 2020 for inspiration: <https://2020.spaceappschallenge.org/awards>.

## THE PURPOSE OF SPACE APPS

While awards are an exciting and compelling reason to participate in Space Apps, we like to start by reminding everyone that Space Apps is, at its core, a collaborative enterprise – not a competitive one. Above all else, we hope that participants have the opportunity to learn, grow, and share. We celebrate all of your ideas and efforts, whether or not you receive an award!

In this vein, please consider the goals of Space Apps 2021 as you form your teams and craft your solutions:

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- To inspire collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking
- To foster interest in Earth and space science and exploration
- To raise awareness of NASA and space agency partners' data around the world
- To encourage growth and diversity of the next generation of scientists, technologists, designers, engineers, and artists

## ELIGIBILITY AND JUDGING PROCESS

### Phase 1: Local Event and Universal Event Judging

#### Local Event Judging

Following the hackathon, all solutions from each virtual [location](#) will be evaluated by a panel of Local Judges, organized by the respective Local Lead. Using the Space Apps judging criteria (see below), the panel will select 1-3 solutions (depending on the total number of submissions in each location) from among all projects in their location to advance to Global Judging. These teams will be known as “Global Nominees.”

Local Leads and Local Judges may also, if they wish, award local prizes. The team(s) that win local prizes will not necessarily be the same teams that advance to Global Judging. This will be determined by the panel of Local Judges.

#### Universal Event Judging

Following the hackathon, all solutions submitted to the Universal Event will be evaluated by a team of approximately 30 Subject-Matter Experts. Using the Space Apps judging criteria (see below), the Universal Event Judges will select the top projects to advance to Global Judging. These teams will be known as “Global Nominees.” The number of Universal Event teams that will advance to Global Judging will be proportional to the

number of projects that advance to Global Judging from local events, usually around one in ten.

### **IMPORTANT: Eligibility for Global Judging**

To be eligible to advance to Global Judging from either a Local Event or the Universal Event, your team and/or project must meet certain requirements. Please see the [Space Apps 2021 Project Submission Guide](#) for full details. Here is a list of the minimum requirements:

- Complete all of the required fields on the project submission page (see the [Space Apps 2021 Project Submission Guide](#) for a list of fields).
- Respond to one of the official Space Apps Challenge statements. Exception: Projects submitted to “Invent Your Own Challenge” will not be eligible for judging and awards.
- Use English language on the project page and in any linked materials. Exception: If your team chooses to create a video for the Project “Demo,” you can speak in another language. However, it MUST include English language subtitles.
- Make sure that the project does not contain profanity or inappropriate language.
- Ensure that all team members are registered and identified on the team’s webpage. Teams will not be able to add new members after project submission has closed.
- Have no more than six people on a team. The maximum number allowed per the website is six. The minimum is one.
- Submit the project on the Space Apps website by Sunday, October 3 at 11:59 PM local time, in accordance with the local time of the location for which your team is registered. Exception: If your team is registered for the Universal Event, your project must be submitted in accordance with the local time of the team member who created your team. Check with your Local Lead if you have questions about the deadline for your location.
- Adhere to all rules within the Space Apps [Participant Terms and Conditions](#).
- Check the box on the project submission page that says, “I have read and understand the program's submission requirements (as documented in the [Space Apps 2021 Project Submission Guide](#)) and the [Participant Terms and Conditions](#), and I fully agree to them.”
- Check the box on the project submission page that says, “Check the box when you submit your project that says, “I want my project to be considered for Global Judging.”

Projects selected during Local Event Judging and Universal Event Judging will move on to Global Judging and will be known as “Global Nominees.” Global Nominees will be announced via Space Apps social media and appear on the Space Apps website:

<https://2021.spaceappschallenge.org>.

## Phase 2: Global Judging

During Global Judging, all Global Nominees will be reviewed by a team of expert judges from NASA and other partner agencies. Each project will be evaluated according to the judging criteria (below). These votes will determine the top teams, who will be known as the “Global Finalists.” Once notified, Global Finalists will be requested to submit their country or territory affiliation, if they haven’t provided it during the registration process.

Global Finalists will be announced via Space Apps social media and appear on the Space Apps website: <https://2021.spaceappschallenge.org>.

## Phase 3: Executive Judging

The Global Finalists will be reviewed by an executive committee from NASA and partner space agencies. These judges are leaders and executives at the agencies with a variety of subject matter expertise. Each Global Finalist project will be evaluated by each executive judge. This committee will nominate teams for one of 10 Global Awards:

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

The winning submission for each of the categories above will be known as the “Global Winners.” Global Winners will be announced via Space Apps social media and appear on the Space Apps website: <https://2021.spaceappschallenge.org>.

## GLOBAL AWARDS

Space Apps Global Award winners will be featured on the Space Apps website and social media. Once travel is deemed safe, winning teams will receive an invitation to the Winners Trip, which could potentially include viewing a spacecraft launch at a NASA facility.

Each winning team member will be allowed to invite a guest of their choice. The Local Lead associated with each winning team, and a guest of their choice, will also receive an invitation. ALL invited guests will be responsible for arranging and financing their own travel, visas, meals,

incidental expenses, and accommodation. Winners typically conduct fundraising activities to cover the costs of their trips.

Please also note that winners' and guests' invitations and access to NASA facilities are subject to NASA security and United States regulatory screening and clearance.

The details of the Winners' Trip are subject to change based on the evolving dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, since there are many factors, including weather, that determine the successful launch of a rocket on schedule, NASA cannot guarantee that travelers will actually see the launch.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

In addition to the minimum requirements outlined above in the “**Eligibility for Global Judging**” section, local, global and executive judges evaluate the projects according to the following standards:

- **Impact:** How much impact (quality and quantity) can this project have? Does it solve a big problem or a little problem? Will it inspire or help many, or a few?
- **Creativity:** How creative/innovative is the approach? Is the project novel and something that hasn't been attempted before, or is it an incremental improvement on something that already exists?
- **Validity:** Is the solution scientifically valid? Will it do what it sets out to do? Can it work in the real world?
- **Relevance:** Is this project responsive to the challenge for which it was submitted? Is it a complete solution or does it have a long way to go? Is it technically feasible? How usable or user friendly is the solution?
- **Presentation:** How well did the team communicate their project? Were they effective in telling the story of the project: the challenge, the solution, and why is it important?

While many Space Apps teams consider the first four judging criteria carefully and excel at developing solutions with great potential, remember to pay equal attention to the final

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criterion: presentation. After all, how can your solution make a difference if you can't effectively present and explain your solution in a way that will convince people to implement it? We recommend devoting time and resources to developing your pitch and building a great story around your project. Be sure to recruit team members with expertise in storytelling, design, and other skills to help document your project and share the value of your solution! For tips on creating your Project "Demo," see the [Space Apps 2021 Demo Guide](#).

**Happy Hacking!**