

2023 SPACE INNOVATION CHALLENGE

JULY-NOVEMBER 2023

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The 2023 Space Innovation Challenge sought to find and award top startups that will help accelerate the commercialization and transition of in-space themes including: health tech and biotech-in-space; in-space capability providers (stations and facilities); in-space capability providers (stations and facilities); utilization of space-derived data; on-orbit operational data management; and next-generation hardware for space observation, monitoring, and sensing. The client, Advanced Technology International, also held one of the five awards for a HBCU or MSI-originated company.

OUTCOME & RESULTS

Advanced Technology International (ATI) recruited its TechConnect division to conduct a challenge through which it would achieve several goals: build and promote a space community affiliated with the ATI brand, attract strong non-traditional participants who could also join ATI consortia, and promote space technology to ensure their future success. Specifically, ATI also wanted to allocate at least one award to a historically Black college or university (HBCU).

As the program administrator, TechConnect was responsible for all aspects of the innovation effort. The TechConnect team designed the public-facing project page. Furthermore, it was at the recommendation of TechConnect that ATI participate in an informational webinar for the project, hosted by TechConnect. TechConnect provided a comprehensive spectrum of outreach to the global innovation community including social media, direct email messages to the extensive TechConnect network, as well as targeted outreach to new individuals and organizations with relevant technologies or expertise. The intent of the outreach effort, regardless of pathway, was to raise awareness of and interest in the project.

Through this project, from a pool of 137 applicants, of which 88% were non-traditional, ATI identified 23 finalist companies to pitch on stage at Defense TechConnect Innovation Summit. Review panelists included representatives from:

- APEX
- Aurelia Foundry
- Blue Origin
- International Space Station National Lab
- Lockheed Martin
- Raytheon

Following the pitch, review panelists convened privately to discuss who would receive each of the five \$10,000 awards. Winners included:

- Eascra Biotech
- Katalyst Space Technologies LLC
- Kinnami Software Corporation
- Mahina Aerospace LLC
- SaraniaSat, Inc.

TechConnect is proud to support technology for space and in space and to bring awareness of out-of-this-world solutions to the broader innovation community.

18
COUNTRIES OF
ORIGIN

137
APPLICANTS

88%
NON-
TRADITIONAL
APPLICANTS

18%
WOMAN-OWNED
COMPANIES

29%
IN HEALTH TECH
AND BIOTECH-
IN-SPACE

5
AWARDEES

23
FINALISTS

58%
FROM SEED-STAGE
STARTUPS

20%
IN NEXT-GENERATION
HARDWARE FOR SPACE
OBSERVATION, MONITORING,
AND SENSING

