

GEN AI BERLIN HACKATHON *GUIDE* 2026

A remote build phase + a 24-hour on-site sprint. Finals on the GenAI Berlin main stage, 16 October 2026.

BUILD IT. BREAK IT.



GENAI BERLIN HACKATHON 2026

The GenAI Berlin Hackathon 2026 is a GenAI-focused hackathon built around real challenges from partner organisations. The competition begins with a multi-week remote phase, after which the most promising teams are invited to the on-site final at GenAI Berlin on 15–16 October 2026, where they complete a final sprint and the top teams pitch their solutions on the main stage.

It runs two kinds of challenges side by side: classic “Build” Challenges – ship a working GenAI solution to a real industry problem – and “Red-Team” Challenges, where partners put a live GenAI product on the table for teams to break under clear rules of engagement.



Teams

1–5 PEOPLE

- Developers & Engineers
- Product & Business Minds
- Designers & Creatives
- Security & Domain Experts

We welcome anyone building with generative AI – from students and startup engineers to seasoned practitioners. The strongest teams typically mix skills.

Remote phase

14 SEPTEMBER – 2 OCTOBER 2026

Online

Build & probe, with online mentor sessions. A jury reviews all submissions and the shortlist is announced 6 October.

On-site phase

15–16 OCTOBER 2026

Humboldt Carré, Berlin

24-hour sprint. At least one team member must attend in person. Science-fair mentoring and feedback session. Top teams pitch on the main stage; winners announced in the closing block.

HOW TO APPLY

- 1

JOIN THE DISCORD
The hub for announcements, teammates, mentors and support.
[Join Discord >](#)
- 2

REGISTER ON THE SUBMISSION PLATFORM
The link to access the submission platform will be published on Discord on 14 September 2026.
- 3

FIND YOUR TEAM AND PICK A CHALLENGE
When challenges go live on 14 September.
- 4

START BUILDING – OR BREAKING
Joining is free.
Questions → hackathon@genaiberlin.com

PRIZES & RECOGNITION

Every stage of the hackathon comes with concrete recognition:

SHORTLISTED

- Invitation to the on-site 24-hour sprint
- Mentoring & feedback
- Conference passes for the team (count TBC).

FINALIST

- Live pitch on the GenAI Berlin main stage
- Website feature
- PR and social amplification
- Inclusion in the highlight video

WINNER

- Cash prize
- Partner credits/subscriptions
- Winner feature on genaiberlin.com
- PR and social amplification.



All teams – shortlisted and not – are notified at the end of each stage.



Cash Prizes TOTAL PRIZE POOL (TBA SHORTLY)

1 st Place	tba
2 nd Place	tba
3 rd Place	tba

Cash prizes will be complemented by attractive non-cash prizes (e.g., software credits)

Best Break Award
the most impactful responsible red-team finding

Per-challenge partner awards
funded by individual challenge partners

THE CHALLENGES

Partner organisations can submit two kinds of challenges. You enter exactly one – build something new, or break something real. Challenges are announced on **14 September 2026**.

BUILD IT.
BREAK IT.

BUILD CHALLENGE



A real industry problem, with the partner's data, API access and credits.

Who it's for:

For teams who want to ship – turn a genuine problem into a working GenAI product.

What you do:

You build a working solution over the remote phase and refine it on-site.

Evaluation focus:

Measurable impact, technical quality, feasibility and scalability, and effective use of GenAI.

RED-TEAM CHALLENGE

Berlin signature



A live GenAI product or feature, with scoped access and clear rules of engagement.

Who it's for:

For security-minded teams and domain experts who want to find the cracks.

What you do:

You probe, jailbreak and stress-test the product; document reproducible findings; demo the best breaks (with partner approval).

Evaluation focus:

Severity × reproducibility × write-up quality. The most impactful responsible break wins the Best Break Award.

PROVIDE YOUR CHALLENGE



Partners bring a real Build challenge – with data, API access and credits – or a Red-Team challenge with scoped access.

In return: logo placement, on-site recognition, a seat as mentor or juror, and early visibility into what teams build (IP stays with the teams).

[Become a challenge partner >](#)

RED-TEAM RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Red-team challenges are legal, scoped and responsible. Every red-team challenge operates under these rules:

SCOPE IS CLEARLY DEFINED

Each challenge defines the exact product surface, endpoints and test accounts. Anything else is off-limits.

ONLY PROVIDED ACCESS

No attacks on partner infrastructure beyond the sandbox; **no DoS or volumetric testing**; no social engineering of partner staff.

RESPONSIBLE DISCLOSURE

Findings go to the partner first via the submission form; nothing is published without partner sign-off.

STAGE DEMOS ARE CURATED

"Best breaks" are demoed live only with partner approval – partners get advance notice and a veto.

DATA HANDLING

No exfiltration or retention of real user data encountered during testing: report and destroy.

CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES THROUGHOUT

The full rules of engagement, any applicable NDA terms and disclosure policy are provided with each red-team challenge brief.

14 Sep – 2 Oct

PHASE 1 REMOTE BUILD & PROBE

- Challenges are announced on 14 September; teams form (solo – 5) and pick a challenge.
- Build or probe remotely, with online mentor sessions through the phase.
- "Deliverable 1" is due 2 October: a concept/prototype (build) or preliminary findings (red-team).
- A jury reviews all submissions and the shortlist is announced 6 October.

15 – 16 Oct

PHASE 2 ON-SITE 24-HOUR SPRINT

- Shortlisted teams receive conference passes (perk details TBC) and come to Berlin.
- 15 Oct: a science-fair mentoring and feedback session opens the 24-hour sprint.
- 16 Oct: final submissions due midday; top teams pitch on the main stage; winners announced in the closing block.

THIS ISN'T A WEEKEND SPRINT – IT'S A REAL PRODUCT-DEVELOPMENT CYCLE, IN TWO PHASES.

DATES & DEADLINES

 Challenge release	Challenges announced, team formation opens 14 September 2026	Challenges go live on 14 September. You form a team (solo – 5), pick a challenge, and start building or probing remotely.
 Remote phase	Remote build & probe phase 14 September – 2 October 2026 Deliverable 1 due (prototype / preliminary findings) 2 October 2026	You work remotely with online mentor sessions. Deliverable 1 – a concept/prototype or preliminary findings – is due 2 October.
 Shortlist	Shortlist announced 6 October 2026	A jury reviews every submission; shortlisted teams are announced 6 October and invited on-site.
 On-site & finals	On-site 24-hour sprint 15 – 16 October 2026 Finals & winners on the main stage 16 October 2026	The 24-hour sprint runs 15 – 16 October. Final submissions are due midday 16 October; the top teams pitch on the main stage and winners are announced.

SUBMISSIONS AND EVALUATION

BUILD CHALLENGE		RED-TEAM CHALLENGE	
2 OCTOBER		Remote phase 	
Deliverable 1	Evaluation criteria	Deliverable 1	Evaluation criteria
Concept / prototype (repo or demo)	Innovation & technical quality	Preliminary reproducible findings	Severity × reproducibility × write-up quality
Short Pitch Deck	Practical relevance & business/ societal value		
	Feasibility & scalability		
	Effective use of GenAI		
16 OCTOBER 12:00		On-site Final 	
Deliverable 2	All above criteria +	Deliverable 2	All above criteria +
Final repo	Iteration on the science-fair feedback	Final findings write-up	Iteration on the science-fair feedback
Demo video	Overall quality of the final pitch	Demo of the best breaks	Overall quality of the final pitch
Pitch deck			
Project page			

JURY

The finals are judged by a jury of challenge-partner representatives and senior GenAI practitioners. A jury seat on "their" challenge is part of the challenge-partner package.

MENTORS

During the remote phase, mentors may run online sessions – office hours, technical deep-dives and feedback – to help every team ship. Partners can nominate mentors from their teams.

[Become a challenge partner >](#)

[Nominate a mentor or juror >](#)

CODE OF CONDUCT

All participants, mentors and partners follow the GenAI Berlin Hackathon Code of Conduct. Be respectful, build responsibly, and – for red-team challenges – stay strictly within the rules of engagement.

IP OWNERSHIP

Ownership of submitted projects remains entirely with the participating teams. Challenge partners and jury members may review and discuss the work, but any further commercial use or collaboration requires a separate agreement with the team. For red-team challenges, findings are disclosed to the partner under the challenge's disclosure terms.

GET IN TOUCH

hackathon@genaiberlin.com

www.genaiberlin.com/hackathon

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