



AFRIHACK 2026 GUIDE

Tips For Building A Winning Team

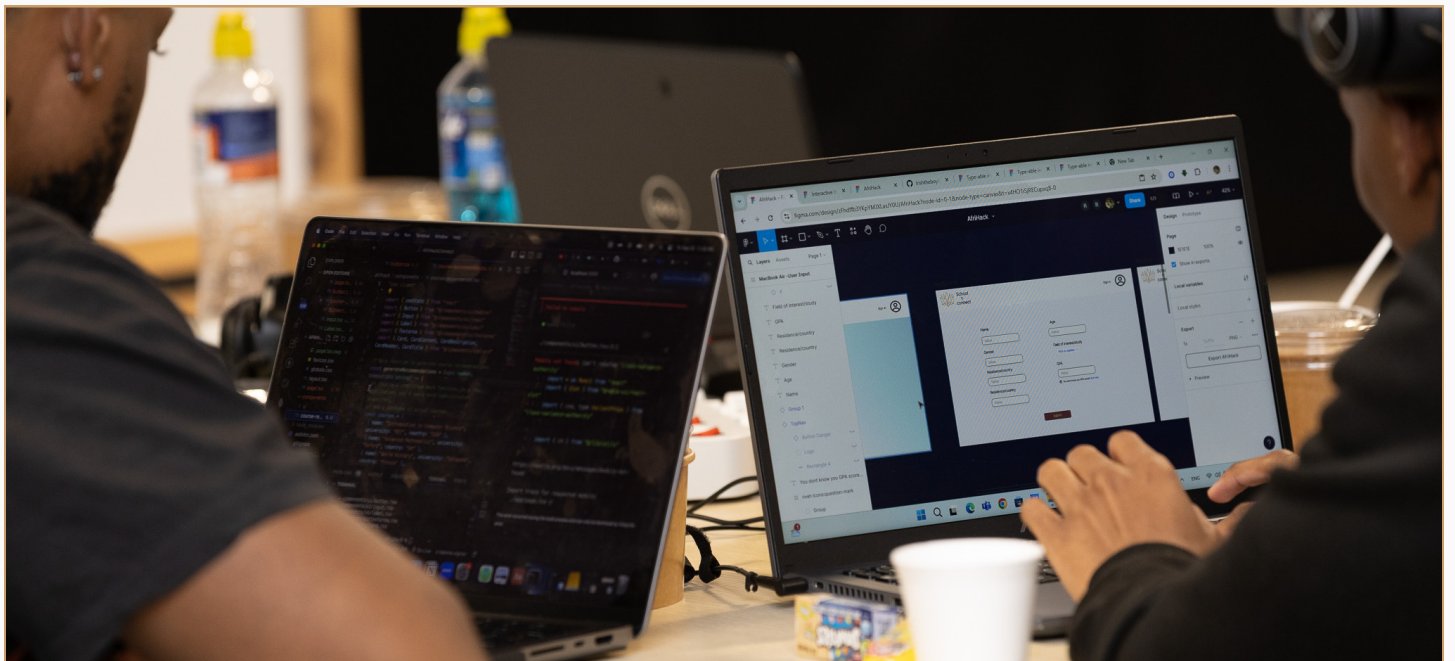
AFRIHACK 2026: PROSPECTIVE TEAM GUIDE

How to Prepare, Build Your Team, and Succeed at AfriHack

Welcome!

So you're thinking about entering AfriHack. That's a great decision. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know to build a strong application, form a winning team, and prepare for the 24-hour challenge.

Whether you're a first-year student or a seasoned coder, these tips will help you show up ready.



1. What is a Hackathon?

A hackathon is a time-bound event where teams collaborate to build a working prototype that solves a real-world problem. It's not about hacking into systems – it's about creative problem-solving under pressure.

Myth	Reality
"You need to be an expert coder"	Teams need a mix of skills: coding, design, business thinking, presentation
"You must build a finished product"	A functional prototype is the goal – not a polished app
"You code alone in a corner"	Hackathons are collaborative; mentors and teammates help
"Only computer science students can win"	Winning teams include designers, business students, and domain experts

2. How AfriHack Works

Application - Your team submits a brief proposal, team composition, and a GitHub portfolio link

Selection - Teams are chosen based on skill diversity, past projects, and motivation

Competition - 24 hours of building, mentoring, and pitching at a venue in your province

The challenge could be focused on any sector: education, healthcare, finance, agriculture, energy, mobility, or something else entirely. You won't know until the morning of!

3. Building the Best Team

Teams must have **exactly** 4 members. A winning team is not four coders – it's a mix of complementary skills.



The Ideal Team Composition

Role	Skills Needed	Who Could Fill This
The Builder	Strong coding skills, knows frameworks, can architect a solution	Computer Science, Software Engineering, IT student
The Designer	Can design interfaces, thinks about user experience, creates wireframes	Design, Multimedia, HCI student, or a coder with design sense
The Strategist	Understands business models, can articulate value proposition, thinks about impact	Business, Economics, or any student with entrepreneurial mindset
The	Confident speaker, can tell	Any discipline – often the same

Communicator	a story, manages presentation and Q&A	as Strategist, but can be separate
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Tips for Forming Your Team

Do	Don't
✓ Recruit from different year levels	✗ Four first-years with no senior guidance
✓ Diversity is an advantage	✗ All four from the same friend group with identical or exact skills
✓ Look outside your department	✗ Ignore business and design skills
✓ Test working together on a small project first	✗ Form a team just because you're friends

4. Preparing Your Application

Your application is your first chance to impress. Here's what judges look for:

- GitHub Portfolio (Required). At least one team member must provide a link to a GitHub repository showcasing a previous project. This doesn't need to be perfect – but it must show that you can:
- Write functional code
- Document your work (a good README file)
- Use version control (commits, branches)

If your team doesn't have a GitHub portfolio yet:

- Build a simple, small project together before applying
- Contribute to an open-source project

- Document a class assignment properly

Team Proposal

You'll be asked to briefly describe:

- Your team's motivation for entering
- Any relevant experience (hackathons, projects, coursework)
- Why your team is well-suited for AfriHack
- Keep it concise, specific, and enthusiastic.



5. How to Prepare Before the Event

Practice a mini-hackathon: Set a 6-hour timer with your team and build something small. Learn how you work together under pressure.

Prepare a tech stack: Decide which frameworks, APIs, and tools you'll use. Have them installed and tested before the event.

Create reusable templates: Have a basic web or mobile app template ready. You can build on it during the hackathon.

Research past winners: Look at previous AfriHack projects (available on our website). What made them successful?

Discuss backup ideas: Your first idea might not work. Have 2-3 problem

areas you're excited about.

Assign roles in advance: Who codes? Who designs? Who researches? Who presents? Know before you arrive.

6. What to Bring (and What Not to Bring)

Bring	Leave at Home
✔ Laptop and charger	✗ Extra monitors (space is limited)
✔ Headphones	✗ Alcohol or substances
✔ Student ID	✗ Outside food (we provide meals)
✔ Government ID (for prize fulfillment)	✗ Anything valuable you don't need
✔ Comfortable clothes (blanket and pillow are highly recommended)	✗ Outside guests without permission



9. Tips from Past Winners

"Don't overcomplicate. We won with a simple solution that worked perfectly, while teams with bigger ideas struggled to get their demo running."

– 2025 Winner

"The overnight is hard. We took shifts – two people slept for 3 hours while two kept building. We were fresher in the morning."

– 2024 Winner

"Use the mentors. They gave us a crucial piece of advice on our business model that changed our whole pitch."

– 2025 1st Runner-up

"We practiced our pitch 12 times before Sunday. By the time we presented, we could do it in our sleep."

10. Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to be an expert coder?

No. Teams need a mix of skills. If you're a designer or business student, you're valuable.

Can I apply as an individual?

No. You must apply as a team of exactly 4. Use the tips above to find teammates.

What if my team doesn't have a GitHub portfolio?

Build one. Even a small class project, properly documented, is enough.

Do we have to stay overnight?

You can leave, but you may miss out on mentor sessions and collaboration. Most teams stay.

What if we don't finish?

Many teams don't finish everything. Judges care about a working demo of the core feature, not a fully polished product.

Is there a fee to participate?

No. AfriHack is free for selected teams. Catering is covered.

What do winners receive?

Cash/sponsor prizes



AfriHack 2025 Winners with judges

11. Checklist Before You Apply

- | ☐ | Form a team of exactly 4 members with complementary skills
- | ☐ | Assign roles (Builder, Designer, Strategist, Communicator)
- | ☐ | Ensure at least one team member has a GitHub portfolio ready
- | ☐ | Write your team proposal (motivation, experience, why you'll succeed)
- | ☐ | Complete the online application form
- | ☐ | Secure department endorsement
- | ☐ | Submit before the deadline

12. Ready to Apply?

Applications close August 15th. Visit our website to register:

Connect With Us

- 📱 Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Youtube): **@afrihack & @empirasglobal**
- ✉️ Questions: **info@empirasglobal.com**

We can't wait to see what you build. Hackathons are a fantastic opportunity to learn, collaborate, and build something amazing. By following these tips and strategies, your team can increase its chances of success and have a memorable experience.

Good luck, and happy hacking!

