

Carina AI R&D Accelerator 2026. Pre-Hackathon Team Preparation Guide

Purpose

The Carina AI R&D Accelerator Hackathon forms the first two days of the AI accelerator event. It is designed to identify, validate, and progress high-value commercial opportunities that deliver meaningful customer outcomes and can progress into future product investments, roadmap initiatives, and commercial releases..

The goal is not to build a prototype. The goal is to demonstrate that a real customer problem exists, that a compelling solution can address it, and that the opportunity is worthy of continued investment following the Summit.

Hackathon Success Checklist

- Solve a real customer problem
- Demonstrate measurable customer value
- Show commercial potential
- Use AI to accelerate outcomes
- Validate key assumptions
- Present an investment-ready opportunity

What We Are Looking For

Every submission must focus on solving a real customer problem. Solutions should create customer-facing value such as revenue growth, adoption, client retention, market expansion, customer experience improvement, or market-differentiated AI-enabled capabilities.

Internal productivity or technical debt initiatives alone are insufficient unless they directly create measurable customer outcomes. Yes, these benefits can be combined with customer-facing outcomes to amplify solution value.

The following ideas, by themselves, are generally not considered materially differentiated growth opportunities and should not be the primary focus of a submission:

- A chatbot and RAG technical implementation
- Dashboards for existing data

Mindset

Do not ask 'What can we build in two days?' ... ask 'What can we prove in two days?' Teams should focus on proving customer demand, validating assumptions, demonstrating measurable outcomes, and showing a credible path to economically and commercially viable productisation.

Pre-Event AI-Driven Development Lifecycle (AI-DLC) Design Lead Workshop

All participants are required to attend one of the pre-event AI-DLC Design Lead Workshops before the Hackathon (event invites have been sent). The workshop is designed to provide education around a common knowledge base for AI-assisted Software Development Lifecycles (AI-DLC), opportunity discovery and validation techniques, and expectations for the Hackathon.

Participants are strongly encouraged to attend live to maximise the value of the workshop, ask questions, clarify expectations, and address any issues before the event begins. The session will be recorded. To provide reasonable access across global teams, two workshop sessions have been offered. **Participants only need to attend one session – the content at both sessions will be the same.**

Session	Date	Meeting Link
Session 1	14 July 2026:	https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/290690104419113?p=aHfqpdUr66HFseqcA
	Euro/Asia	Meeting ID: 290 690 104 419 113. Passcode: ZE7iM2Ao
Session 2	15 July 2026	https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/212601590368523?p=vUauPU7SV66gVxf0HT
	NAM/Euro	Meeting ID: 212 601 590 368 523. Passcode: vG72mU7Y

Before You Arrive – What Teams are allowed to Prepare

Define the customer problem, identify measurable and desirable customer outcomes, estimate commercial impact to ensure you have selected a material opportunity, prepare a guiding problem and solution hypothesis, and prepare supporting datasets, client or stakeholder interviews, and prepare your team’s technical environment. **See appendix B & C for further help.**

We don’t want the establishment of a shared technical workspace or environment delaying your progress. We do want you to select the right opportunity to tackle before arriving and have enough context prepared to support your work. You will need access to either Claude Code or Codex agentic R&D tools and you may benefit from access to an API key. If you need support here – please ask.

Team Roles

Identify the roles each team member will perform. Examples include Product Lead, Technical Lead, AI Lead, Pitch Lead, and Research Lead. Of course one individual may perform multiple roles. Each team will be assigned a coach.

AI Expectations

Teams are expected to leverage AI-assisted discovery, coding, testing, documentation, workflow automation, commercial pitch creation and validation. Be prepared to explain how AI accelerated your outcomes. Don’t let reasonable shared access to tools, APIs, tokens or similar get in the way of your work. If you need help before the event to establish this – please ask.

Judging Criteria

Criteria	Weight
Commercial Impact	25%
Innovation	20%
Customer Value	20%
Feasibility	20%
Pitch Quality	15%

*In addition to the formal judging rubric, judges will be strongly influenced by the context of “Investment Readiness”. Teams that demonstrate a clear sponsor, customer need, ownership model, roadmap path, productionisation strategy with economic and commercial benefits will be viewed and scored more favorably for post-event funding, support and sponsorship. **We are looking for opportunities that are investment ready.***

Appendix A - Team Assignments

Team 1 – Orthant

Name	Business Unit	Role
Ryan Witt	Orthant	COO
Mike Hartnett	Orthant	Portfolio Manager.
Andrew Burnside	Orthant	Head of AI & Innovation
Amee Hamilton	Orthant	CTO
Asterios Papastergios	Orthant	GeoAI Data Scientist
Jim Skimming	TicSystem	CTO & AI R&D Specialist

Team 2 – ARA

Name	Business Unit	Role
Murray Hipper	Acquire	Geoscience Specialist
Kieran McCluskey	Acquire	Geoscience Specialist
Phil Marnweck	Acquire	ESG Product Specialist
Javer Perez	Zyght	AI Lead
Steve Mundell	Ara	CTO
Fabio Teixeira	Nexo	CTO
Jose Eduardo Pronto Matias	NEMS	Senior Developer & AI Champion
Nicholas Whiting	Envirosoft	Senior Software Developer

Team 3 – Datamine Geology

Name	Business Unit	Role
Anthony Cook	Datamine	VP Geology
John Shippick	Datamine	VP Exploration
Stephen Bucks	Datamine	Technical Director
Marc Seguin	Datamine	Technical Director
Anthony Dunk	Datamine	Senior Engineer
Alex Howgego	Datamine	Senior Engineer
Pieter du Plessi	Datamine	Mineware Technical Head
Katheleen Hansmann	Datamine	Geology PM
Louwrens Cronje	Datamine	Geology PM

Team 4 – Datamine Production & Operations

Name	Business Unit	Role
Brad Donnelly	Datamine	VP Production. Internal Coach
Dion Borg	Datamine	LIMS General Manager
Tom Raybould	Datamine	Engineering Manager
Tim Hughes	Datamine	Engineering Manager
Brendan Edmonds	Datamine	AI Engineer
Grant Passfield	Datamine	Development Lead
Jeremy Martin	Datamine	R&D Director Production
Gustav Hawlitschek	Datamine	Planning PM

Team 5 – Ascertra / Canopus

Name	Business Unit	Role
Matt McKinley	Ascertra	Executive Leader. Internal Coach
Chris Herridge	Ascertra	CTO
Tom Cable	Ascertra	Engineering Manager
Adrian Morada	Canopus	Scenario Planning Specialist
Dominic Stratton	Ascertra	Head Product Ops + AI Champion
Ellie Broad	Navarik	Group Marketing Director

Team 6 – Ikon Science / Navarik / Omnira

Name	Business Unit	Role
Fiona Fardon	Ikon Science	Dev Ops Lead
Oliver Bowden	Ikon Science	Science Manager
Brian Bolstad	Ikon Science	Science Manager
Rob Bose	Omnira	CTO
Herman Li	Navarik	Software Developer
Harman Mohaar	Omnira	Software Developer
Rodrigo Calle	Carina	Portfolio Leader

Team 7 – GreatSoft / Sodep

Name	Business Unit	Role
Kleyton Miranda Ferreira	Sodep	BUM. Internal Coach
Lucas Ribeiro Oliveira	Sodep	CTO
Carl Neethling	GreatSoft	R&D Manager
Lodewyk Malan	GreatSoft	Product Manager
Sheldon Mayhew	GreatSoft	Product Manager
Bradley Muller	GreatSoft	Product Manager
Ramkrishna Kulkami	WeShine	CTO

Appendix B - Product Ideation Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of ideation is to identify and validate a meaningful customer problem and demonstrate a credible path to creating a commercially valuable AI-enabled solution. The objective is not to build the most sophisticated prototype; it is to identify an opportunity that creates measurable customer outcomes and can progress into future product investment.

Think Problem First

Start with real customer problems rather than technology. Use customer support tickets, sales objections, interviews, inefficient workflows, compliance challenges, and customer-created workarounds as sources of ideas.

Frame opportunities as: '[Persona] struggles with [job-to-be-done] because [constraint].'

Select an Opportunity Worth Investing In

Evaluate opportunities against customer pain, commercial impact, market reach, differentiation, feasibility, and speed to value.

Teams should focus on opportunities that could materially contribute toward doubling the impact, growth, or strategic value of a product line within a three-year timeframe.

Learn from Adjacent Industries

Identify how similar problems are solved elsewhere and capture best-in-class workflows, automation patterns, human-in-the-loop approaches, AI-enabled decision support, and simpler customer experiences.

Define the Solution Hypothesis

Use the structure: 'We help [persona] achieve [outcome] by [approach] so they can [measurable impact].'

Identify the target customer, problem, expected outcome, and primary success metric.

Define the Minimum Valuable Features (MVF)

Focus on the smallest solution capable of demonstrating customer value. Clearly identify what will be demonstrated, what is out of scope, and what evidence would justify further investment.

Validate Assumptions

Identify customer, data, AI capability, integration, and commercial assumptions. The goal is to reduce uncertainty, not eliminate it.

Gather Evidence

Interview customers or users, validate pain points, quantify impact, identify sponsors, and confirm willingness to pilot. Focus on proving customer demand and business value rather than building large amounts of software.

Prepare an Opportunity Summary

- Customer and problem;
- Proposed solution;
- Customer value;
- Commercial opportunity;
- Minimum Valuable Feature;
- Key assumptions and risks;
- Validation evidence;
- Why Carina team is uniquely positioned to succeed.

Appendix C - Team Preparation Checklist

Teams that arrive with these preparation activities completed will be able to spend more time validating customer value and less time overcoming operational collaboration and technical friction.

Arrive with the problem selected, reasonable evidence gathered, some relevant working data available, and the environment you intend to use prepared and accessible. Some teams are from multiple BUs – these hybrid teams need to collaborate to set up a shared environment before the event.

The Hackathon time will be best spent validating and working on the opportunity -- creating value, not troubleshooting access, tooling, or setup.

1. Customer Problem Selected
2. Customer Outcome Statement Completed
3. Commercial Opportunity Background Sizing
4. Some Evidence Collected
5. Hypothesis Outline Defined
6. Sponsor (s) Identified
7. Helpful Test/Working Data Gathered
8. AI & Technology Access Confirmed
 - Teams must have access to either Claude Code or Codex and where appropriate an API key.
 - If help is required to set up or gain access pre-event. Please ask.
9. Collaboration Environment Ready
10. Roles & Pitch Ownership Defined