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Grand fishing forecast challenge winners announced

SPRINGFIELD, Virginia – The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the National Security Innovation Network announce winners of a \$1 million, six-month grand challenge to identify novel ways to forecast industrial fishing.

- **First place (\$500,000): Athenium Analytics.** Leverages AI-enabled imagery analytics, predictive models and proprietary risk scores to identify and manage risk (athenium.com).
- **Second place (\$200,000): Sync Layer, Inc.** Uses data visualization technology to provide comprehensive analysis of large volumes of data (syncarena.com).
- **Third place (\$50,000): Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence.** Created by the late Paul G. Allen, cofounder of Microsoft, the Allen Institute specializes in AI research and development in multiple sectors, including maritime (allenai.org).

The competition challenged nonfederal innovators to develop a concept of operations and demonstrate forecasting capability, with the goal of using the industrial fishing forecasts to complement NGA efforts to systematically detect, track and characterize maritime vessels engaged in illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing. IUU fishing is a key contributor to the decline and potential collapse of fisheries, threatening the stability of economies, food systems and ecosystems regionally and worldwide.

“We saw some promising CONOPS and forecasts in the challenge. The challenge winners’ forecasts outperformed the historical Global Fishing Watch baseline by up to 25%,” said Mike Brady, Ph.D., NGA research scientist and program manager for the grand challenge. “With regular feedback and refinements, these forecasts could be beneficial for operational uses in the future.”

The judging panel included representatives from NGA, NSIN, U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The panel judged both the CONOPS and demonstrated ability to forecast industrial fishing during eight rounds of daily and weekly fishing forecasts, scored against observed fishing activity published by the Global Fishing Watch.

The Global Fishing Forecast Grand Challenge is part of NGA’s larger focus on using commercial techniques and unclassified sources to enhance maritime domain awareness,

including IUU fishing. NGA monitors, tracks and forecasts maritime activities to help the agency's customers, partners and allies combat illicit maritime activities. The commercial innovation championed through the challenge brought new insights into promising approaches for providing anticipatory GEOINT, and that knowledge will inform future acquisitions.

The winners were part of the group of finalists announced May 16, which included: Esri, Jataware Corp., Orbital Insight, PierSight LLC, PolArctic LLC, Misram LLC and University of Miami CSTARS. Each finalist received \$25,000.

More information about the prize challenge is available [here](#).

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About NGA

NGA delivers world-class geospatial intelligence that provides a decisive advantage to policymakers, warfighters, intelligence professionals and first responders.

NGA is a unique combination of intelligence agency and combat support agency. It is the world leader in timely, relevant, accurate and actionable geospatial intelligence. NGA enables the U.S. intelligence community and the Department of Defense to fulfill the president's national security priorities to protect the nation.

For more information about NGA, visit us online at nga.mil, [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [X/Twitter](#).

About NSIN

NSIN is an unrivaled problem-solving network in the U.S. Department of Defense that adapts to the emerging needs of those who serve in the defense of our national security. We are dedicated to the work of bringing together defense, academic and entrepreneurial innovators to solve national security problems in new ways.

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