



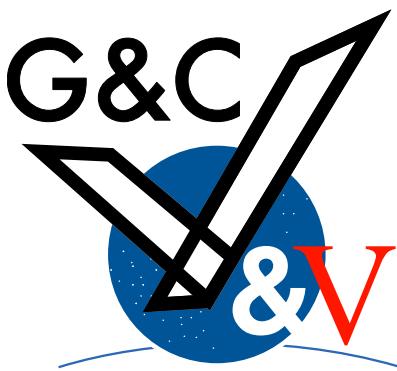
A community-wide GNC competition organized by the Inter-Agency GNC V&V Working Group, hosted as part of the 13th ESA Conference on Guidance, Navigation & Control Systems (GNC) and the 10th International Conference on Astrodynamics Tools and Techniques (ICATT), Sevilla, Spain, 28 September–2 October 2026.



2026 ESA GNC Conference

Why a competition

This competition aims to challenge both industry and academia using a common benchmark problem. The ultimate objective is to foster knowledge transfer and increase confidence in modern GNC algorithms developed in the research domain when applied to non-academic problems.



In the year 2370, humanity's most ambitious observatory drifted in the quiet dark far beyond Pluto's frozen orbit. It was called NERINA, a space telescope unlike any before it—its mirror petals made of self-healing crystal alloy, its sensors grown from bio-engineered photonic cells that could "taste" starlight as much as see it. NERINA had one mission: to take the first clear image of the galaxy NGC-9214, a faint spiral so distant that even its brightest stars arrived at Earth as little more than whispers of light. For decades, scientists suspected that a rare class of bio-luminescent exoplanets might orbit within it. If true, the faint spectral signatures could hint at thriving alien ecosystems. But catastrophe has cut the mission short, and the clock is unforgiving. This is the last chance to search for life beyond Earth!

- 1 February 2026:** Publishing of the Benchmark Problem on the conference website & Competition Opening
- 31 March 2026:** Deadline to register your team w/o penalty on the final score
- 31 May 2026:** Deadline to register your team with a penalty on the final score
- 31 May 2026:** Deadline to submit your team solution
- Early July 2026:** Announcement of the winners
- 28 September - 2 October 2026:** Presentation of the winners' solutions at the ESA GNC & ICATT Conference

THE EUROPEAN SATELLITE BENCHMARK FOR CONTROL EDUCATION & INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

The competition is available at <https://essr.esa.int/project/european-satellite-benchmark-for-control-education-industrial-training> together with the freely available benchmark developed under ESA public licence.



If you are interested in participating in the competition and have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the organizers. For inquiries related to the benchmark, please contact: francesco.sanfedino@isae.fr.