CYBER FORCE
PROTECT DEFEND COLLECT FIGHT

ROYAL HIGHER INSTITUTE *for* DEFENCE

2026 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

CY. D3F. FACTORY

STRIKE IT

CYBER DEFENCE FACTORY (CDF) PROGRAM

INFO DAY 11 & 12 February 2026

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!! Subject to approval of Council of Ministers!!

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PROGRAMME

10:00 Registration and coffee
10:30 Context STRIKE IT
10:45 Content of the call
11:45 Q&A
12:00 Networking
12:30 Light lunch and networking
14:00 End of information day

Housekeeping rules

- Please put your phone on silent mode.
- For the smooth running of this conference and to respect the rights of the speakers, we kindly ask you to refrain from using your phones to record the conference, either in audio or video format.
  We also request that you do not use AI tools to transcribe or distribute the content of the conference.
- Do not drink & eat in the meeting rooms.
- Please give back your neck lanyard when leaving the event.

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1 Context and objectives

2 Timeline and Content

3 The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

4 Submission and Evaluation procedure

5 Q & A

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Context STRIKE IT

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Colonel Erwin Orye

Innovation Officer, Cyber Force, Belgian Defence

- Cyber Defence Factories are hubs dedicated to cyber innovation: 2 sites where technology and cutting-edge solutions are enablers of innovation
  Objective = Innovation of high TRL and short-cycle

- Initiative from Cyber Force
  Powered by host sites (A6K & Howest)

- Use « Triple Helix model »
  Cyber Force through partnerships
  Will reinforce Defence Technology and Industrial Base (DTIB)

- « STRIKE IT » is the funding programme for projects at the Cyber Defence Factories

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2 CDF

Cyber Defence Factories
A6K
Howest

1,8 M

Up to 150K per project
Partnerships preferred
At least 1 private entity

6 month

Regular coordination @CDF site

TRL>7

"whole of society" approach

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strike-it@mil.be

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Timeline & Content

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Timeline & Content

STRIKE IT CALL	INDICATIVE BUDGET
12 projects : 6 projects A6K 6 projects Howest	1,8 MEuro Max 150.000 euro/project

Timeline & Content

Context

STRIKE IT 2026 tackles the growing interconnection between **civilian and military IoT**, where vulnerabilities in civilian systems directly impact defence operations.
It strengthens protection, detection, and defence capabilities across both domains through a whole-of-society approach.
Greater societal cyber resilience leads to stronger, more aware, and more resilient military IoT systems.
The initiative fully aligns with the EU Cyber Resilience Act by reinforcing security-by-design, lifecycle security, and vulnerability management.

Research Scope

STRIKE IT 2026 seeks mature, deployable cybersecurity capabilities close to market readiness, prioritising integration, operational deployment, and lifecycle resilience rather than fundamental research. It follows a **whole-of-society approach**, supporting solutions in civilian environments that directly enhance defence-related cyber resilience—whether delivered as technologies, operational services, or applied training.

- Theme 1 focuses on the cybersecurity of connected objects in **land and air domains, including flying systems, vehicles, smart equipment, wearables, and connected tools.** It emphasises secure-by-design technologies and resilience in degraded or contested connectivity environments.

Timeline & Content

- Theme 2 targets the cybersecurity of connected systems **onboard vessels and within port environments, covering maritime and naval platforms, onboard systems (manned and unmanned), port infrastructure, logistics chains, and cyber-resilient navigation, propulsion, cargo, and situational awareness systems.**

Together, these two themes address complementary cybersecurity challenges across key operational domains, strengthening protection, detection, and defence across both civilian and defence-relevant environments.

Impact for Defence

Proposals should deliver tangible cybersecurity benefits for defence and security. They must **reduce systemic cyber risks** across dual-use IoT, **increase trust in civilian technologies** used in defence operations, and **strengthen readiness** through full lifecycle cyber resilience. Securing civilian IoT is essential, as robust civilian digital infrastructures directly support military effectiveness and operational continuity.

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Timeline & Content

POC Theme at CDF6000 (A6K - Charleroi) for daily operations : Nicolas Herman

Mail : nicolas.h@a6k.be

POC Theme at CDF8000 (HOWEST-Bruges) for daily operations : Yannick De Smet

Mail : yannick.de.smet2@howest.be

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Timeline & Content

	Date	At / via
Information sessions	11 February 2026 12 February 2026	CDF6000 (Charleroi) CDF8000 (Brugge)
Deadline proposals	8 March 2026 (23h59)	Mail
Remote peer review evaluation	9 March – 3 April 2026	Online
Ethical Evaluation	9 March – 25 March 2026	RHID
Internal selection of proposals	4 May 2026	RHID
Communication of results to applicants	6 May 2026	Mail

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The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

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The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

Eligibility Criteria

Partnership:
At least one private company
Triple-helix partnerships are encouraged

The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

Eligibility Criteria

You are a **company, a(i)sbl or a foundation**?

Document	**Name and format of the file**	**How to deliver?**
Extract(s) from the UBO register	ACRONYM_UBO_COMPANY.pdf	E-mail to strike-it@mil.be
Consent form(s) for security verification	ACRONYM_CONSENT_COMPANY_PERSON.pdf	E-mail to bureau.industrie@mil.be
Proof(s) of dispatch of the consent form(s) for security verification	ACRONYM_PROOF_COMPANY_PERSON.pdf	E-mail to strike-it@mil.be
Company Honourability & Vulnerability self-assessment declaration	ACRONYM_DECLARATION.pdf	E-mail to strike-it@mil.be

Failing to deliver these documents will result in exclusion of the pre-proposal

The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

Research Ethics

Proposal contains an ethics self-assessment

The Ethical Advisory Board of the RHID will assess this information and can advise how to deal with ethical aspects of the proposal

The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

Projects

- Duration: 6 months
- Start of selected projects: June 2026
- Budget rules:

	Public Research Institute and Private non-profit research centre	Private company
Partner budget FINANCED BY DEFENCE	100% eligible costs	Maximum of 65% of the eligible costs, with a potential maximum of 80%, according to the size of the company

The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

Budget Rules

Category of expenditure	Rules
STAFF	• Staff members bound contractually to a public institution - full time or part time - cannot apply for him/herself for Defence staff budget for that part. • The funding is limited to the time and period in which the staff participates in the project.
GENERAL OPERATING COSTS	• no detailed justification is required for these costs, the administration must keep these invoices in its accounts in the event of an audit.
SPECIFIC OPERATING COSTS	• Described in the proposal • Justified by invoices during project
OVERHEAD	• 10% of total staff and operating costs

The rules of the STRIKE IT Call

Budget Rules

Category of expenditure	Rules
EQUIPMENT	• Described in the proposal • Justified by invoices during project
SUBCONTRACTING	• Max 25% of partner's budget • ! Subcontractors must be registered in Belgium • ! If applicable submit UBO register to DEFRA secretariat • ! If applicable, obtain security clearance

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Submission and Evaluation Procedure

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Submission and Evaluation Procedure

Available documents:

- Information document, incl. submission & evaluation guidelines and budget rules
- FAQ
- Template proposal
- Gantt Chart
- Budget file
- Veiligheidsverificatie toestemming – Vérification de sécurité consentement
- Company Honourability & Vulnerability self-assessment declaration
- Ethics self-assessment

RHID Website

https:///www.defence-institute.be/

Submission and Evaluation Procedure

Content of proposal:

- Template proposal

As a separate document :

- Gantt Chart
- Budget file
- Extracts UBO register (if applicable)
- Veiligheidsverificatie toestemming – Vérification de sécurité consentement (if applicable)
- Company Honourability & Vulnerability self-assessment declaration (if applicable)
- Ethics self-assessment

RHID Website

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Submission and Evaluation Procedure

Evaluation Procedure

- Step 1 - General eligibility check
- Step 2 – Peer review evaluation
  - Criteria :
    - ➢Overall quality
    - ➢Quality proposed solution
    - ➢Impact for Defence and for society

Submission and Evaluation Procedure

Evaluation Procedure

- Step 3 – evaluation by internal evaluation committee
  - Criteria :
    - ➢ The match between the proposal and the scope of call,
    - ➢ The quality of the proposal, based on the description of the project objectives and the innovation with respect to the state of the art,
    - ➢ The quality of the partners and the adequacy of the partnership,
    - ➢ The relevance and potential impact for Defence.

Submission and Evaluation Procedure

After selection

- Selection decided by Royal Decree
- Royal Decree and Signature of contract
- First advance payment → follow invoicing instructions of the RHID
- Selected projects start in June 2026
- Kick-off meetings

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Q&A

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Networking & lunch

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THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK !

FAQ on website

STRIKE-IT@mil.be

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