



**CYBER FORCE**  
PROTECT DEFEND COLLECT FIGHT



**ROYAL HIGHER  
INSTITUTE**  
*for* **DEFENCE**

# 2026 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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**



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# 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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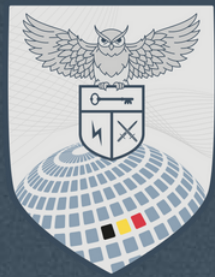
- 1 Context and objectives
- 2 Timeline and Content
- 3 The rules of the STRIKE IT Call
- 4 Submission and Evaluation procedure
- 5 Q & A



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# Context STRIKE IT



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# Colonel Erwin Orye

Innovation Officer, Cyber Force, Belgian Defence



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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**



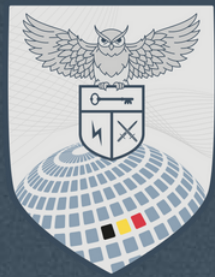
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# Timeline & Content



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# Timeline & Content

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



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# 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.



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# 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](mailto:nicolas.h@a6k.be)

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

Mail : [yannick.de.smet2@howest.be](mailto:yannick.de.smet2@howest.be)



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# Timeline & Content

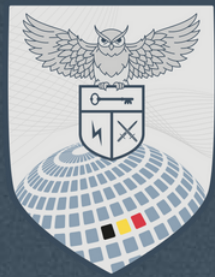
	Date	At / via
Information sessions	11 February 2026 12 February 2026	CDF6000 (Charleroi) CDF8000 (Brugge)
Deadline proposals	8 March 2026 (23h59)	Mail
Remote peer review evaluation	9 March – 3 April 2026	Online
Ethical Evaluation	9 March – 25 March 2026	RHID
Internal selection of proposals	4 May 2026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



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# The rules of the **STRIKE IT** Call

## Eligibility Criteria

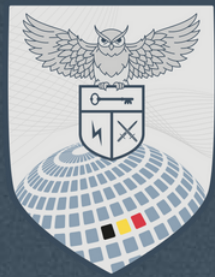
You are a <b>company</b> , a(i)sbl or a foundation?		
Document	Name and format of the file	How to deliver?
Extract(s) from the UBO register	ACRONYM_UBO_COMPANY.pdf	E-mail to <a href="mailto:strike-it@mil.be">strike-it@mil.be</a>
Consent form(s) for security verification	ACRONYM_CONSENT_COMPANY_PERSON.pdf	E-mail to <a href="mailto:bureau.industrie@mil.be">bureau.industrie@mil.be</a>
Proof(s) of dispatch of the consent form(s) for security verification	ACRONYM_PROOF_COMPANY_PERSON.pdf	E-mail to <a href="mailto:strike-it@mil.be">strike-it@mil.be</a>
Company Honourability & Vulnerability self-assessment declaration	ACRONYM_DECLARATION.pdf	E-mail to <a href="mailto:strike-it@mil.be">strike-it@mil.be</a>
Failing to deliver these documents will result in exclusion of the pre-proposal		



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# 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



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# The rules of the **STRIKE IT** Call

## Projects

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

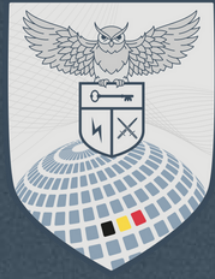
	Public Research Institute and Private non-profit research centre	Private company
Partner budget FINANCED BY DEFENCE	100% eligible costs	Maximum of 65% of the eligible costs, with a potential maximum of 80%, according to the size of the company



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# The rules of the **STRIKE IT** Call

## Budget Rules

Category of expenditure	Rules
STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• The funding is limited to the time and period in which the staff participates in the project.</li></ul>
GENERAL OPERATING COSTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• no detailed justification is required for these costs, the administration must keep these invoices in its accounts in the event of an audit.</li></ul>
SPECIFIC OPERATING COSTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Described in the proposal</li><li>• Justified by invoices during project</li></ul>
OVERHEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10% of total staff and operating costs</li></ul>



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# The rules of the **STRIKE IT** Call

## Budget Rules

Category of expenditure	Rules
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Described in the proposal</li><li>• Justified by invoices during project</li></ul>
SUBCONTRACTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Max 25% of partner's budget</li><li>• <b>!</b> Subcontractors must be registered in Belgium</li><li>• <b>!</b> If applicable submit UBO register to DEFRA secretariat</li><li>• <b>!</b> If applicable, obtain security clearance</li></ul>



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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/>



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# 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

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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



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# 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.



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# 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](mailto:STRIKE-IT@mil.be)

**CY. D3P**

**FACTORY**

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