



Info Day on the 1st SECURE Open Call



Agenda

10:00 – 10:10	Welcome, introduction and overview of the agenda <i>Speakers: Luca Nicoletti, Head of the Industrial, Technological and Research Unit (ACN) and Head of the NCC-IT</i> <i>Luca Tagliaretti, Executive Director, European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC)</i>
10:10 – 10:25	Turning CRA into reality: key phases of the implementation phase, guidance, and ongoing regulatory efforts <i>Speaker: Tjabbe Bos, Policy officer, Cybersecurity and Digital Privacy Policy, DG CONNECT</i>
10:25-10:45	FSTP: SECURE 1st Open Call – how to submit & get financed <i>Speaker: Alessandro Calabrese, Head of Advisory & Training (Cyber 4.0)</i>
10:45 – 11:05	SECURE Open Platform – Registration & Proposal Submission <i>Speaker: Alberto Garinei, CTO (Idea-Re)</i>
11:05– 11:25	Open Discussion <i>Speakers: All participants</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Q&A– Feedback & suggestions
11:25– 11:30	Closing remarks <i>Speakers: Luca Nicoletti (ACN) and Danilo D’Elia (ACN)</i>

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Introduction



SECURE - Strengthening EU SMEs Cyber Resilience Project



Coordinator:

- Agenzia per la Cybersicurezza Nazionale (ACN)

Partners:

- Naukowa i Akademicka Sieć Komputerowa – Państwowy Instytut Badawczy (NASK, Poland)
- Instituto Nacional de Ciberseguridad de España – INCIBE (Spain),
- Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium – CCB (Belgium)
- Luxembourg House of Cybersecurity – LHC (Luxembourg),
- Associazione Cyber 4.0 (Italy)
- Autoritatea pentru Digitalizarea României – ADR (Romania),
- Industrie 4.0 Österreich – Plattform für Intelligente Produktion (PIA, Austria).

Project Scope

Reinforce the cybersecurity resilience of European micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (mSMEs) by helping them comply with the requirements of the **Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) - Regulation (EU) 2024/2847**, through the launch of Open Calls for financial support.

Project Total Budget

EUR 16,5 Million

Number of Open Calls in the next years

At least 2

Target Applicant

EU and EEA Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

1st Open Call General Information



Financial support for mSMEs to **co-finance mini-projects** (activities, goods and services) aimed at strengthening cyber resilience and achieve the compliance with the Cyber Resilience Act.



Open Call Operational Information

Call Launch Date

28/01/2026

Language

ENGLISH

Call Deadline

29/03/2026

Grant Type

LUMP SUM

Funding

(no mandatory financial reporting)



Budget and Cofinancing

Call Total Budget

EUR 5,000,000

Projects Cofinancing Rate

50%

Prefinancing (optional)

Max. 40% of the grant

Maximum Grant

EUR 30,000

The Ceiling applies also to projects with total eligible costs higher than EUR 60.000

All Relevant Call Documents will be shared today on the website



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Reporting Methods & Eligible Costs

Lump Sum Funding Mechanism



Not Needed

Actual Cost Reporting at any stage of the project

Needed

- Breakdown of estimated eligible costs by budget category
- Evidences for the achieved objectives

The Cost esteem will be used during the Proposal Evaluation to assess the consistency of the project activities with the expected costs

Eligible Costs *(can be co-financed)*

Direct Costs

- **Personnel Costs** - Employees; natural persons direct contracts; seconded persons; SME owner and natural person beneficiary.
- **Subcontracting costs** - service providers, consultancy etc. – Must be registered in EU or EFTA MS; not controlled by countries outside EU/EFTA.
- **Equipment** - max 80% of direct costs; only for the shared cost corresponding to the actual rate of use during project duration
- **Purchase cost** - consumable and supplies, promotion, dissemination, results protection, publications, certificates etc.

Indirect Costs

Flat rate of 7% of the total eligible costs (included in the max. financing of EUR 30,000)

Ineligible costs *(cannot be cofinanced)*

Return on capital, debt and debt service charges, provisions for losses or debts, interest owed, currency exchange losses, excessive or reckless expenditure, costs already funded by another EU action, alcoholic beverages, gifts or entertainment expenses, travel costs



Eligibility Requirements



Call Eligibility Requirements

1. Company Eligibility Criteria



The Applicant is an individual entity



The Applicant is a mSME (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2003/361/oj/eng>)



The Applicant is established in one of the eligible countries (EU + EEA)



The applicant meets all the ethical and legal requirements (only self dec.)



Absence of double funding (only self dec.)

2. CRA-Related Eligibility Criteria



Applicants CRA scope

Requirements: Applicants must operate in a sector or have business activity that falls within the CRA scope and regulatory framework or demonstrate willingness to do so



Eligible Activities: only projects aimed at achieving compliance with CRA will be accepted

Who Can Apply? 1/3

Company Eligibility Criteria

All eligibility criteria must be met to apply for the call

1

Individual Entities

Eligible Organizations

- Single organization with legal personality acting independently in its own name
- Self employed persons (i.e: sole traders)
- Associations and interest groupings with legal personality (only as sole beneficiaries)

Exclusions

- Consortia, business networks or joint applications
- Natural Persons (except for self-employed persons – i.e: sole traders)
- International Organizations
- Entities without a legal personality
- EU bodies
- Other special cases (see Annex 1)

2

mSMEs Definition

Enterprise category	Headcount: annual work unit (AWU)	Annual turnover	or	Annual balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ EUR 50 million	or	≤ EUR 43 million
Small	< 50	≤ EUR 10 million	or	≤ EUR 10 million
Micro	< 10	≤ EUR 2 million	or	≤ EUR 2 million

For *Partner & Linked enterprise* definition please visit:
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/79c0ce87-f4dc-11e6-8a35-01aa75ed71a1>

3

Geographical Eligibility

Company HQ or Branch for which the financing is requested & UBO Nationality shall be EU + EEA

4

Legal and ethical Requirements

e.g: no conviction by final judgment for fraud, corruption; no guilt of professional misconduct ...

5

No Double Funding

Submitted project must not be subject to double funding

The role of National Cybersecurity Coordination Centres (NCC)



What are NCCs?

NCCs are **public entities designated by each EU Member States + Norway and Iceland** established to strengthen research, innovation and industrial capabilities **in the field of cybersecurity**. E.g. they are responsible for:

- coordinating national activities with the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC);
- promoting research excellence and industrial competitiveness across the Union;
- facilitating collaboration among industry, the public sector, academia and citizens;
- ***Facilitating access to EU funding opportunities to industry stakeholders.***

NCCs' roles and responsibilities are regulated under [ECCC] Regulation (EU) 2021/887

Which is the role of the NCC during the SECURE Open Call

Within SECURE Project and during SECURE Open Calls NCCs **will carry out Companies Eligibility Checks and support enterprises during the application.**

Companies based in a Member State whose NCC does not support the SECURE Project First Call may still submit a Project Proposal, but there is no guarantee that their application will pass the Company Eligibility checks phase, as the NCC cannot perform the required validation

How to make sure that the NCC representing my country will support the project?

Soon on SECURE website will be available a list of the nationalities of the supporting NCCs. Make sure to check the presence of your country.

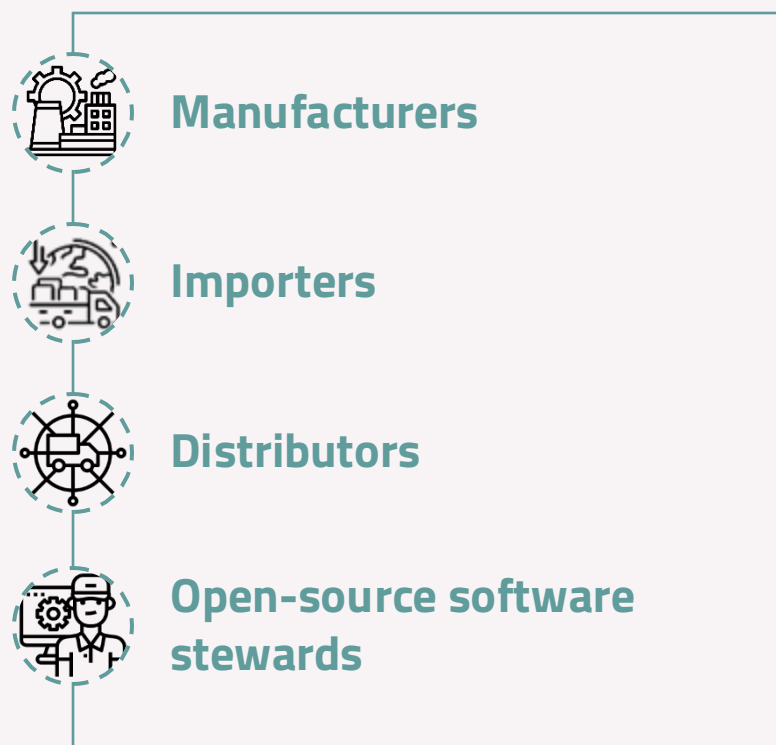
How can I contact my NCC by my own?

Here's the public list of NCCs contact points:
https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/nccs_en

Who Can Apply? (2/3)

Applicants CRA-Related requirements

Economic operators under CRA Scope



OF

Products with digital elements (PDEs) – Focus of CRA Category within the first Open Call

Category	Brief Meaning	Compliance Procedure	Example Products
Default Products	Low-risk PDEs (~90% of total), general consumer or office devices	Internal self-assessment leading to an EU declaration of conformity	Standard printers, USB drives, office productivity software, smart speakers, connected light bulbs, fitness trackers

Based on the adoption of implementing acts by European Commission specifying technical descriptions of categories of products with digital elements, the next Open Calls will be focused also on:

- Important Products (Class I and II)
- Critical Products



ADMISSIBLE COMPANIES: the Applicant Company falls, may fall or will fall under the CRA Scope based on the CRA Regulation (Regulation-EU 2024/2847)

Who Can Apply? (3/3)

Eligible Activities & Other EU Projects



Category 2: CRA Cybersecurity Governance, Risk Management and Compliance Assessment – Modules 1, 2 and 3

Category 3: CRA requirements training

Category 4: CRA-related cybersecurity trainings

Category 5: Expertise support in the CRA conformity project execution

Category 6: Vulnerability tests

Category 7: Laboratory tests

Category 8: Penetration tests

Category 10: CRA self-assessment tool

Category 11: Software Development – Security by Design for CRA Products

Category 12: Business Continuity, Incident and Response Planning for CRA Products and Processes

Category 13: Supply Chain Risk & Security Assessment

Category 14: Data Protection & Privacy Compliance

Category 16: Monitoring, protection and prevention services and tools

SECURE is building **synergies with other CRA implementation DEP projects.**

Tools developed under these linked projects will be made available to mSMEs to support eligible activities under the cascade funding scheme.

Category 1: Accredited trusted third-party audit with the CRA certificate

Category 9: CRA third-party assessment service

Category 15: CRA Regulatory Obligations and Documentation Support

→ **Out of Call 1 Scope due to lack of CRA Certification Schemes**



Application & Implementation Process



Application & Implementation Stages

SECURE online platform



STAGE 1 – Registration & Proposal Submission

During this stage, the Applicant will use the platform to enter company data and submit the project for which funding is requested. At the end of the submission, both eligibility and technical evaluations will be carried out.



PHASE 1

Registration & Company Documentation Upload



Actor: Applicants



Available Time: Call open for 2 Months



Applicants To Dos: Document Upload & Draft



PHASE 2

Proposal & Budget Drafting



PHASE 3

Proposal Evaluation



Actor: SECURE, Ev.Co., NCCs



Available Time: Max. 4 Months



Applicants To Dos: Platform & Email Monitoring



PHASE 4

Sub-Grant Agreement Signing



Actor: Applicants



Available Time: Max. 2 Months



Applicants To Dos: Sign & Submit Sub-GA

PUBLIC LINK TO SECURE ONLINE PLATFORM WILL BE SHARED ON THE WEBSITE ON 28th OF JANUARY

STAGE 2 – Project implementation & Tech. Report

This stage will apply only to Applicants whose Proposals have been evaluated as fundable. Applicants will have 6 months to implement the project and complete their Technical Reports. Implemented Projects will then be funded.



PHASE 5

Initial CRA Maturity Assessment



Actor: Applicants



Available Time: Max. 6 Months



Applicants To Dos: CRA Maturity Assessment



PHASE 6

Implementation & Technical Report



Actor: Applicants



Available Time: Max. 6 Months



Applicants To Dos: Implement Project & Report



PHASE 7

Implementation Assessment, Payment & Attestation



Actor: SECURE & Ev.Co.



Available Time: Max. 4 Months



Applicants To Dos: Platform & Email Monitoring



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Related Call Official Document = **ANNEX 1 - Open Calls Application Guidelines**

Phase 1 – Registration & Company Documentation upload



Platform Activities

1

Register User on the online Platform

2

Fill in the Company registration data forms

3

Fill in the Bank account registration form

4

Fill in the self declaration form

5

Download Sign & Upload Mandatory Documents

Document Name	Where do I find it?	What should I do next?
1.Company Self Declaration	<i>Download it directly from the Online Platform (automatically generated by the platform)</i>	<i>Read it, digitally sign it and re-upload it on the platform</i>
2.ANNEX 3 - Ownership Control Declaration	<i>Download the template from the website</i>	<i>Fill it, digitally sign it and upload it on the platform</i>
3.Valid Registration Report + Company Good Standing Statement + shareholders + ownership graph	<i>Those documents are normally issued by National Chamber of Commerce or equivalent authorities. Refer to your relevant national authority to gather the necessary documentation.</i>	<i>If Registration report, shareholders and ownership graph are issued in a single document upload the same doc. in all the required field. Otherwise you can normally use the dedicated fields.</i>
4.Company Financial Statement (balance/turnover etc)	<i>This document is drafted directly from the company</i>	<i>Draft, sign and upload the document on the platform</i>
5.Other Documents if required	<i>If necessary NCCs can send uploading requests from the platform</i>	<i>Read the requests on notification section and upload the documents on the platform</i>



Phase 2 – Proposal & Budget Drafting

Platform Activities

6

Fill in Project Estimated Costs Fields

7

Ask for Prefinancing, if needed (box check)

8

Download, complete and sign the Project Proposal

9

Download, complete and sign the Proposal Budget

10

Submit the proposal

Project Proposal (download on website)

- **Applicant Profile**
 - *Company description*
 - *Team & Suppliers*
- **Project Relevance**
 - *CRA goals*
 - *Objectives*
 - *Methodology*
- **Expected Impact**
 - *Outcomes for SMEs*
 - *KPIs*
- **WORK PACKAGES**
 - *Task, Milestones*
 - *Deliverable & KPIs quantifications*

Proposal Budget (download on website)

Direct costs	Amount
Personnel costs	0,00 €
Subcontracting costs	0,00 €
Equipment costs	0,00 €
Purchase costs	0,00 €
Total direct costs	0,00 €
Indirect costs (7% of direct costs)	0,00 €
Total project budget	0,00 €
Max SECURE grant	0,00 €

Be sure to indicate measurable and realistic KPIs and clear activities. Consistency between costs and activities will be considered during the evaluation

Phase 3 - Proposal Evaluation



Proposal Formal Evaluation (Evaluation of CRA-Related Requirement)

Will be carried out by:

Cyber 4.0, SECURE Project Partner in charge for Financial Support Activities

Will assess:

- If the company falls under the CRA scope
- If the activities described in the proposal are eligible

Possible Outcomes:

- **Proposal Approval**
- **Proposal Rejection**

Outcomes will be communicated a week after the call closure

TECHNICAL EVALUATION

Will be carried out by:

An independent Evaluation Committee (members will be selected among SECURE Partners' personnel)

Will assess:

- The Score of the proposal-based specific evaluation parameters

Possible Outcomes:

- **Financiable Proposal (RANKING)**
- **Not Financiable Proposal**
 - *Under Treshold Score*
 - *Lowest Scores Exceeding Budget*

Outcomes will be communicated after the Company Eligibility Evaluation (duration: 2 months)

Company Eligibility Evaluation (NCCs check on Company Documentation)

Will be carried out by:

NCCs, as an external endorsing actor of the SECURE Project.

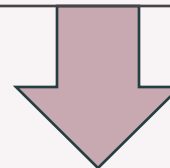
Will assess:

- The truthfulness of Company Declarations
- The authenticity of the documentation
- Dimension and location of the Applicant

Possible Outcomes:

- **Company Approval**
- **Company Rejection**

Outcomes will be communicated a week after at least 2 months after the technical evaluation



Technical Evaluation Criteria (1/2)

Individual Evaluation Parameters



Evaluation Committee will assess the proposal scores by **individual evaluation** and through **Consensus Meetings**.

There will be at least 3 evaluators for each single proposal

Individual evaluations will refer to the following parameters.

CRITERIA	Focus	Score	Evaluation
Excellence and Relevance	1. <i>Relevance to EU cybersecurity goals on CRA</i>	0 = N/A	Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
	2. <i>Project objectives and methodology</i>	1 = Poor	Criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
	3. <i>Resources and capabilities</i>		
Impact and Clarity	1. <i>Expected outcomes for the SME</i>	2 = Fair	Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
	2. <i>Clarity of Description</i>	3 = Good	Proposal addresses the criterion well, but shortcomings are present.
	3. <i>Indicators and KPIs to measure success</i>		
Implementation	1. <i>Work Packages (WP)</i>	4 = Very good	Proposal addresses the criterion very well, with only minor shortcomings.
	2. <i>Deliverables, Evidences and cost consistency</i>	5 = Excellent	Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion; shortcomings are negligible.
	3. <i>References to other EU Projects</i>		

Technical Evaluation Criteria (2/2)

Consensus Meeting Scoring and Ranking



During Consensus Meetings the group of Evaluators who scored a single proposal will calculate the final score that will determine the ranking, following specific calculation rules:

1. The final score for each criterion will be the sum of the evaluators' scores, **with a maximum score of 15 points for each criterion**
2. The overall final score will be the weighted average of all criteria, with a **maximum total score of 15** considering the weights in the table

Evaluators Criteria	Evaluators			ROUNDED SUM	WEIGHTS
	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3		
Quality & Relevance	3	4	4	11	1,5
Impact & Clarity	3	2	2	7	1,5
Implementation	5	5	4	14	1
ROUNDED WEIGHTED AVERAGE				10	



Final Ranking

Proposals will be ranked all together, based on their final scores

Thresholds:

- **Minimum threshold per criterion:** All Proposals with a score below **10 (<10)** in two or more criteria will be excluded from financing.
- **Minimum overall threshold:** All Proposals with a total score below **10 (<10)** will be excluded.

Tie braking rules:

Proposals submitted earlier will be ranked higher than those submitted later.
Amendment periods will not be considered.

Budget Limitations

In case of Call budget exhaustion lowest-ranked Proposals out of budget limit will be excluded

Phase 4 - Results & Sub Grant Signing



Platform Activities

1

EVALUATION RESULTS

2

If proposal has been admitted:
download sign and re-upload
Sub-Grant Agreement

3

Amend Material Errors if
requested

4

Wait and download the
countersigned Sub-Grant
Agreement

5

Receive the Prefinancing if
requested

Evaluation Phase	Exclusions Scenarios Summary	Aknowledgement by Applicant (Approximately)
Formal Evaluation (CRA-related requirements)	1. The company does not, may not and will not fall under CRA scope AND/OR 2. The proposed project activities are not eligible OR	<i>After approximately 1 week after the Call closure</i>
Technical Evaluation	1. Final Proposal Score does not reach the minimum tresholds OR 2. The Proposal is out of budget limit as one of the lowest-ranked proposals (in case of budget exhaustion) OR	<i>After the Company Eligibility Evaluation (duration approximately 2 months)</i>
Company Eligibility Evaluation	1. Company does not match one or more of the Company Eligibility Requirements AND/OR 2. Company's Member State NCC does not provide the evaluation	<i>After at least 2 months from the Technical Evaluation Closure</i>



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Implementation Phases



PHASE 5

Initial CRA Maturity Assessment

COMPLETE THE CRA MATURITY ASSESSMENT ON PLATFORM



PHASE 6

Implementation & Technical Report

To Do – Implement & Upload Documents:

- Complete the proposed project
- Upload the Technical Report
- Upload other necessary evidences



PHASE 7

Implementation Assessment, Payment & Attestation

CHECK PLATFORM AND E-MAIL FOR EV.CO. INTEGRATION REQUEST

GET FUNDED!

COMPLETE SURVEY & DOWNLOAD ATTESTATION

More details will be provided during next webinars



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Related Call Official Document = **ANNEX 1 - Open Calls Application Guidelines**

Project Annexes List

ANNEX NAME	ANNEX DESCRIPTION
ANNEX 1 – Open Call Application Guidelines	Main Call Document containing all the basic information on Eligibility and Application & Implementation Process
ANNEX 1.1-Proposal Template	Download this document from the website, use it to draft your Project Proposal and upload a filled clean version on the platform
ANNEX 1.2-Proposal Budget Guidelines	Download this document from the website and use it as a guidance during the definition of the Proposal Budget (ANNEX 1.3 – Proposal Budget Template)
ANNEX 1.3-Proposal Budget Template	Download this document from the website, use it to estimate the Project Budget and upload a filled clean PDF version on the platform
ANNEX 2-CRA Scope & Eligible Activities, Services and Goods	Download this document from the website and use it as a guidance to understand CRA-related requirements and a list of eligible activities
ANNEX 3-Ownership Control Declaration	Download this document from the website with your company data and upload it on the platform
ANNEX 4 - Valid Registration Report with company good standing statement, shareholders and Ownership graphs	Request this document to your National Chamber of Commerce or equivalent Authority and upload it on the required field in the platform
ANNEX 4.1 - Company Financial Statement	Produced annually by each company (balance/turnover etc...)
Company Self-Declaration (platform annex)	Will be automatically generated by the platform with all the information provided by the Company: download it from the platform, read it, sign it and re-upload it
Sub- Grant Agreement (platform annex)	Will be automatically generated by the platform if the Proposal is admitted to financing: download it from the platform, read it, sign it and re-upload it



All Relevant Documents must be digitally signed in PadES format

Contacts and Other Information



- **WEBSITE:**
<https://www.secure4sme.eu/about-secure>
- **FAQ:** <https://www.secure4sme.eu/faq>
- **For questions on Open Calls please contact:** submission-support@secure4sme.eu
- **For other questions** (CRA Regulation, SECURE project, Other EU Projects, Dissemination, Events, etc.) **please contact:** info@secure4sme.eu
- **Online Contact Form:**
<https://www.secure4sme.eu/contacts>
- **Newsletter:**
<https://www.secure4sme.eu/newsletter>
- **News and Events:**
<https://www.secure4sme.eu/news-events>
- **National (Cybersecurity) Coordination Centres:** https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/nccs_en

Thank you!

Website: www.secure4sme.eu

Contact Mail: info@secure4sme.eu



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