Invitation & application guidelines

Don't miss your chance to meet with fellow cybersecurity entrepreneurs and industry leaders and attend the pitches & B2B meetings

The European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC) and the Bulgarian National Cybersecurity Competence Centre (NCC Bulgaria), in partnership with the Women4Cyber Foundation - Europe, the Bulgarian Ministry of eGovernment, the Bulgarian Cybersecurity Association, UPEE, the European Digital Innovation Hub Trakia, united by the European Cybersecurity COmmunity project (ECCO), have the pleasure of inviting you to the Bulgarian edition of the ECCC Access-2-Finance series, powered by ECCO, scheduled on the 28 November 2024 in Sofia Tech Park, Bulgaria.

The most promising European cybersecurity start-ups and SMEs will have a chance to pitch their innovative cybersecurity solutions and hold B2B meetings with the leading investors and corporates from around Europe. The Bulgarian edition of the ECCC Access-2-Finance series will be held in-person.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
October 28th, 18-00 CET

ECCC cybersecurity business matchmaking events are designed to:

- Cover different investment phases, ranging from seed to strategic investment and M&A,
- Give exposure to potential corporate customers and business partners.

The ECSO STARtup Award 2025

The two best cybersecurity companies participating in the Bulgarian edition of the ECCC Access-2-Finance series will be nominated to compete for the ECSO STARtup Award 2025. Nominees will be selected by the local jury and will be invited to participate in the final competition, which will be held early 2025. During the final ceremony, nominees will pitch to the European jury and will have a unique opportunity to present themselves to high-level investors, corporate executives and cybersecurity experts. For more information, click here.

The Women4Cyber Entrepreneurship Award.

ECSO and the Women4Cyber Foundation joined forces to acknowledge and celebrate women leaders in the cybersecurity field, as well as companies that are actively working towards achieving gender equality. This collaborative effort aims to shine a spotlight on the invaluable contributions of women in cybersecurity while promoting and supporting organisations that prioritise diversity and gender balance. Cybersecurity companies **(co) founded by women** and/or **with women on the board** and/or **with at least 30% of women in the workforce** and/or **demonstrating a commitment to increase female participation are** eligible to apply for the W4C Entrepreneurship Award. For more information, click here.

Winning this award will not only grant recognition but also provide tailored mentoring and exclusive benefits to foster the success and growth of the company.

*To be considered for this Award, the company's pitch will have to be delivered by a female representative.
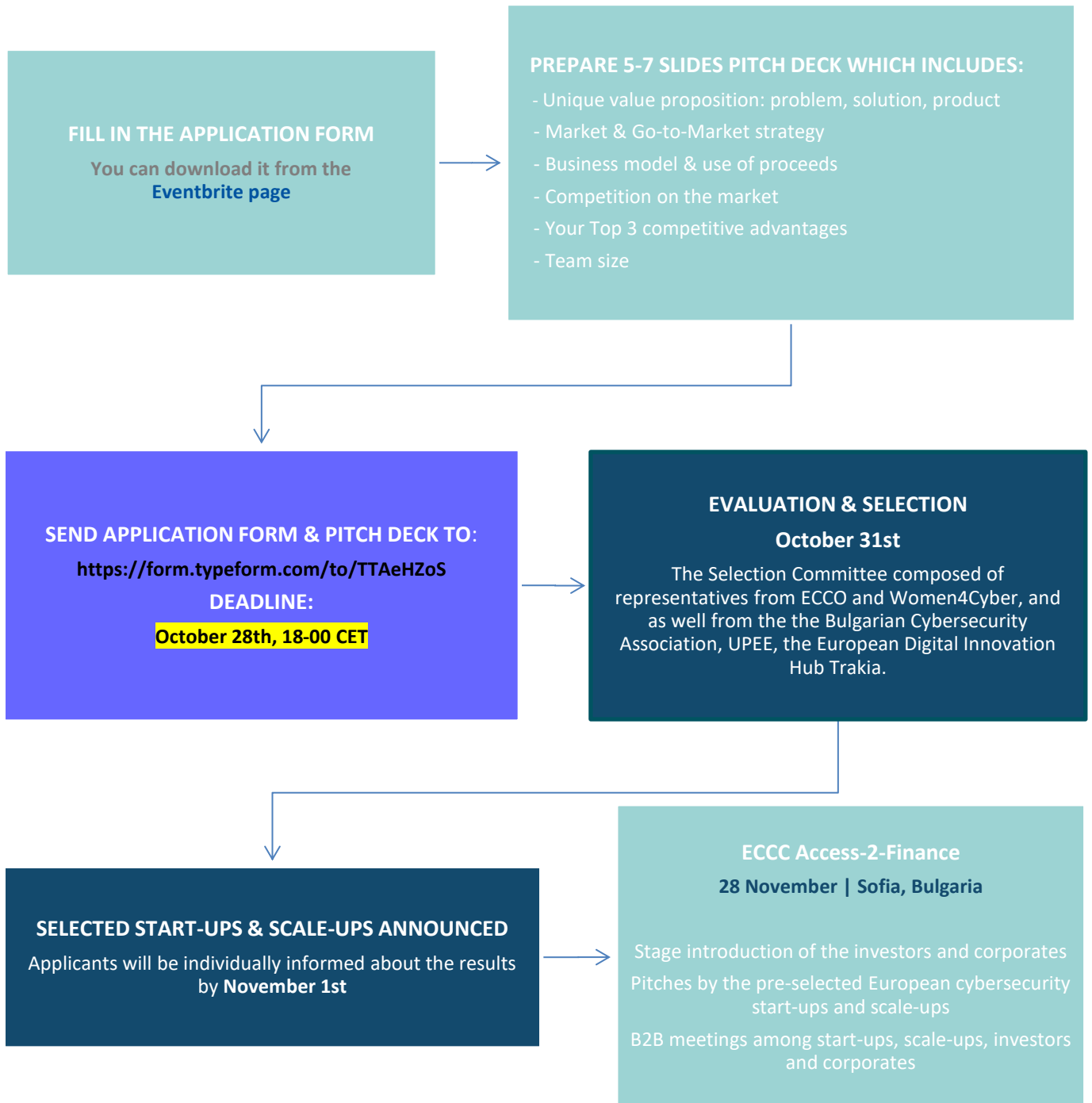
Apply here!

See the 'Application Roadmap' on the following page.

Good luck with your submission!

APPLICATION ROADMAP

The selection of the participating start-ups and scale-ups is based on the most innovative solutions to be presented to investors and corporates

FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORM

You can download it from the **Eventbrite page**

PREPARE 5-7 SLIDES PITCH DECK WHICH INCLUDES:
- Unique value proposition: problem, solution, product
- Market & Go-to-Market strategy
- Business model & use of proceeds
- Competition on the market
- Your Top 3 competitive advantages
- Team size

SEND APPLICATION FORM & PITCH DECK TO:
https://form.typeform.com/to/TTAeHZoS
DEADLINE:
October 28th, 18-00 CET

EVALUATION & SELECTION

October 31st

The Selection Committee composed of representatives from ECCO and Women4Cyber, and as well from the the Bulgarian Cybersecurity Association, UPEE, the European Digital Innovation Hub Trakia.

SELECTED START-UPS & SCALE-UPS ANNOUNCED

Applicants will be individually informed about the results by **November 1st**

ECCC Access-2-Finance

28 November | Sofia, Bulgaria

Stage introduction of the investors and corporates

Pitches by the pre-selected European cybersecurity start-ups and scale-ups

B2B meetings among start-ups, scale-ups, investors and corporates

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS:

- ### European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC)

The European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC) aims to increase Europe's cybersecurity capacities and competitiveness, working together with a Network of National Coordination Centres (NCCs) to build a strong cybersecurity Community. The Centre and the Network will pool resources from the EU, its Member States, as well industry, academia and other stakeholders, to improve and strengthen technology and industrial cybersecurity capacities, enhancing EU's open strategic autonomy.

The Centre will manage 2021-2027 EU funding from the Digital Europe and Horizon Europe Programmes, as well as contributions from Member States. In 2021-2022 the EU is investing more than €300 million in topics such as cyber threat intelligence, cybersecurity upgrades in SMEs, cyber in the health sector, cyber secured hardware and operating systems, or training and skills.

The Governing Board of the Centre is composed of representatives from the Member States (27 members), the Commission (2 members) and the European cybersecurity agency-ENISA (1 permanent observer). In February 2022, the Governing Board elected Pascal Steichen, from Luxembourg, as its Chair, and Katarzyna Prusak-Gorniak, from Poland, as its Vice-Chair. The European Commission is running the Centre until it can operate fully independently, with Miguel González Sancho currently serving as Interim Executive Director of the Centre.

For more information on the Centre, including future funding and job opportunities, follow the Centre on Twitter and on the web.

- ### Women4Cyber Foundation

The Women4Cyber Foundation is a non-profit organisation founded in 2019 aimed at promoting, encouraging, and supporting the participation of women in the field of cybersecurity. Its mission is to develop and grow a cybersecurity community through networking, awareness, education, and training. To do that, the Foundation works to help raise the voices of women through social media and events, enhance female participation in cyber education, promote Role Models and tailored training programmes for entry, up-skilling or re-skilling in cybersecurity: www.women4cyber.eu

NATIONAL PARTNERS:

- **Ministry of eGovernment**

The Ministry of eGovernment in Bulgaria is responsible for implementing digital transformation policies across the public sector. It aims to enhance the efficiency and transparency of government services through innovative technologies and digital solutions, fostering a more interconnected and responsive public administration.

- **National Cybersecurity Competence Centre (NCC Bulgaria)**

The newly launched Bulgarian National Cybersecurity Competence Centre (NCC Bulgaria) focuses on fostering collaboration among government stakeholders, the private sector, and academia, share knowledge, and promote research and innovation. NCC Bulgaria will play a crucial role in building a resilient cyber framework to ensure the safety of digital environments.

- **Bulgarian Cybersecurity Association**

The Bulgarian Cybersecurity Association (BCA) is a professional organization dedicated to advancing cybersecurity standards and practices in Bulgaria. BCA serves as a platform for collaboration among stakeholders in the cybersecurity field, promoting knowledge sharing, best practices, and awareness to strengthen the nation's cyber defense capabilities.

- **UPEE**

The Union for Private Economic Enterprise (UPEE) represents the interests of private businesses in Bulgaria, advocating for policies that foster a competitive and secure business environment. UPEE focuses on enhancing cybersecurity measures within the private sector, providing resources and guidance to ensure resilience against cyber threats.

- **European Digital Innovation Hub Trakia**

The European Digital Innovation Hub Trakia (EDIH Trakia) is part of the EU's initiative to support digital transformation across various sectors. EDIH Trakia provides free access to cutting-edge technologies, expertise, and funding opportunities, particularly focusing on enhancing the digital capabilities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the South-Central region.