

# RULES

## START-UP AWARD 2026

### 1.OBJECTIVE OF THE AWARD

The **INCYBER Start-up Award** aims to promote innovative European start-ups and young companies (candidates must have their registered office located in the European Union, the United Kingdom, Switzerland or Norway). The jury, composed of end users, investment funds, representatives of ANSSI and the Armed Forces, selects each year one or more innovative companies in the field.

The jury may award up to 5 distinct prizes:

1. **President of the Republic Award**
2. **Growth Award**
3. **Operational Impact Award**
4. **Research Award**
5. **Jury's Choice Award** (for start-ups less than 2 years old)

### 2. NATURE OF THE AWARD

The prizes are presented to the winner(s) during the INCYBER Forum, by a leading figure from the digital sector and/or a government representative.

The winner of the **INCYBER Start-up Grand Prize** will receive a partnership **package for the INCYBER Forum 2027**, including:

- A **9m² booth** identified as "INCYBER Start-up Award"
- A **speaking slot** in a panel discussion
- **Increased visibility** across the Forum's communication channels and on its community media, INCYBER News

The winners of the other Awards will each be granted a **pod** in the Innovation Village, as well as **increased visibility** across the Forum's communication channels.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The **INCYBER Start-up Award** is open to:

- European companies (EU, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Norway) that are less **than 5 years** old,
- With an **annual turnover of less than 5 million euros**,
- Operating in the fields of security, digital trust, and/or industrial cybersecurity.

A start-up linked to a large group may apply as long as it is a separate legal entity. Except for the winners of the two previous editions, past participants may reapply (up to three successive applications).

Innovation is broadly understood (technology, use, marketing, etc.). It covers both products and services and applies to both technological and business model innovation.

#### 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

Participation is free of charge.

Candidate companies must complete their application file before **December 7, 2025, at 11:59 pm**.

#### 5. PRESELECTION PHASE

A first selection will be made based on the application file in **December 2025 and early January 2026**. This preselection phase will result in the selection of up to 12 companies.

#### 6.FINAL EVALUATION PHASE

The preselected companies will be auditioned on **February 5 or 12, 2026**, at the Cyber Campus. The hearings will be held in the language chosen by the company, either French or English. Please note that no translation system will be available. A presentation framework will be sent to the candidates beforehand to provide guidance on the jury's expectations and on how to pitch their solution.

#### 7.EVALUATION CRITERIA

The jury will assess the relevance of the solutions presented according to several criteria:

- Innovative dimension of the company and of the solution(s) presented
- Maturity of the solutions/services presented
- Operational effectiveness of the solution(s) presented
- Economic viability of the company and of the solution(s) presented
- Differentiating character of the solution and its ability to create value in an existing environment

#### 8.THE JURY

The Jury is composed of qualified personalities from both the public and private sectors, whose names are publicly available. The Jury is completely independent from the event organizers, who do not take part in the voting. A candidate cannot be a member of the Jury. Before deliberations, members of the Jury must declare any conflicts of interest arising from links they may have with certain candidates (capital, family, personal, employment, subcontracting, etc.). In such cases, they will not participate in deliberations concerning those candidates.

The members of the jury commit to:

- Observing strict confidentiality regarding the information provided by the candidate companies and the

deliberations within the jury,

- Respecting the embargo on the name(s) of the winner(s) until the official announcement by the INCYBER Forum organization,
- Conducting an impartial evaluation of the companies and solutions presented.

After the close of the competition, some jury members may continue to support or mentor certain finalists.

## 9. PUBLICITY

The companies selected for the auditions will be presented on the INCYBER Forum website: <https://europe.forum-incyber.com/> and on the Forum InCyber social networks. Winners may use the name of the Award in their company documents.

## 10. USE OF DATA

In accordance with Law No. 78-17 of January 6, 1978 on data processing, files and freedoms, and European Regulation No. 2016/679, known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the INCYBER Forum teams process participants' personal data in connection with the organization and running of the award.

## 11. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES

Participation in the INCYBER Start-up Award implies full and complete acceptance of these rules.