

DECISION No GB/2024/4

of

**The Governing Board of the European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and
Research Competence Centre**

Adopting the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023

THE GOVERNING BOARD,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/887 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres (hereinafter “the Regulation”),¹ and in particular Article 13(3)(d), Article 17(f) and Article 27;

Having regard to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council,² in particular Article 48 thereof;

Whereas:

- 1) In order to report on the achievements and progress of the Authority in 2023, it is necessary to adopt a consolidated annual activity report for 2023.
- 2) According to Article 13(3)(d) of the Regulation, the Governing Board shall adopt the annual activity report on the progress made by the ECCC in the previous calendar year.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Sole Article

The consolidated annual activity report of the ECCC for the year 2023 is hereby adopted.

¹ OJ L 202, 8.6.2021, p. 1-31

² 86, 11.7.2019, p. 21–56. 2 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 of 18 December 2018 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council, C/2018/8599, OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1–38

Done at San Sebastian on 14/03/2024,

For the European Cybersecurity Industrial,
Technology and Research Competence Centre

(e-signed)

Pascal Steichen

Chairperson of the Governing Board

EUROPEAN CYBERSECURITY COMPETENCE CENTRE

Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR)

2023

Adopted by ECCC Governing Board on 14 March 2024 with Decision No GB/2024/4.

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LEGAL NOTICE

This publication presents the annual activity report of the ECCC for 2023. The report is based on the ECCC Single Programming Document (SPD) 2023-2025 and Budget 2023 as approved by the Governing Board of the ECCC in Decision No GB/2022/24.

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GOVERNING BOARD'S ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

The Governing Board (GB) of the European Cybersecurity Competence Centre ('ECCC' or 'Competence Centre') takes note of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) prepared by the ECCC for the year 2023, and submitted for adoption, in accordance with Article 13(3)(d) of the ECCC regulation. Furthermore, the GB acknowledges that the reporting requirements under Article 27 of the ECCC regulation are covered by this report and the additional dedicated Annex included in CAAR. The GB provides here below its assessment of the CAAR as required by Article 48(1)(b) of the Framework Financial Regulation¹.

The GB, based on its analysis and assessment of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023:

- Acknowledges the evolution from the first ECCC CAAR 2022 with regard to activities covered, the achievement regarding recruitment and onboarding of staff and the progress made towards autonomy;
- Welcomes this CAAR 2023 report of the ECCC and acknowledges that also during 2023 several activities continued to be delivered by the Commission Services and a large part of the reporting is part of DG CONNECT reporting;
- Welcomes the adoption of the ECCC Strategic Agenda;
- Notes the opening of the temporary premises in Bucharest as of 9 May 2023 and the launch of operational activities from Bucharest and looks forward to the move to permanent offices foreseen for second part of 2024;
- Appreciates that all MS have NCCs and that the network of NCCs is operational;
- Looks forward to the final steps in the development and operationalization of the ECCC and its financial autonomy foreseen for 2024.

The GB takes note of the results of the ECCC, and of the activities delivered during 2023, in particular:

- The recruitment of the staff members of the ECCC and the foreseen onboarding of the staff and of the Executive Director until early 2024; to reach about 30 staff members;
- The evaluation of the calls for proposals, the signature of grants and the management of the projects retained for funding under the Digital Europe Programme; the support provided in the evaluation of proposals received under Horizon Europe Programme;
- The preparation and approval of programming documents SPD 2024-2026 and Draft SPD 2025-2027 of the ECCC;
- The issuing of the ECCC requirements for the Permanent Premises and the development of the Fit-Out Plans for the Permanent Premises;
- The progress made in the headquarter agreement negotiation with host country with a forecast of finalization during Q1/2024.

The GB acknowledges that the ECCC is preparing the necessary processes, the SLAs and decisions to finalize its set-up and autonomy.

¹ Framework Financial Regulation (FFR) 715/2019 is implemented by ECCC with Decision No GB/2023/1 of the GB of the ECCC on the ECCC's Financial Rules; this assessment is reflecting also the Annex II of FFR, namely C(2020) 2297 final of 20.04.2020, covering the template for CAAR.

The GB remarks that the financial autonomy shall be reached during 2024 and the move to the permanent premises will take place during the second part of 2024. While not all tasks foreseen in the ECCC 2023 work program were delivered by the end of that year, the GB remarks that there are no critical issues to be reported by the ECCC.

The GB recognizes also for 2023 the instrumental role of the Commission Services, in particular DG CONNECT in performing and delivering the initial ECCC activities and the development of its operational capacity. The GB also welcomes the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) prepared and signed by the ECCC with the aim to foster synergies and efficiency gains with different departments of the European Commission and with ENISA.

The GB thanks the Commission Services, and in particular the ECCC interim Executive Director Miguel GONZALEZ-SANCHO, and acknowledges the hard work of all Commission staff supporting the ECCC, which made possible the results described in this report.

The ECCC GB, having concluded the above assessment, taking account of the Article 27(3) of the ECCC regulation, and article 48 of FFR regulation, hereby instructs the Secretariat of the GB to finalize the process. Namely, to publish the annual activity report and to submit the Consolidated Annual Activity Report for 2023, together with this assessment, to the Court of Auditors, to the Commission, to the European Parliament and the Council as soon as possible.

For the Governing Board,

Pascal Steichen

Chairperson of the Government Board

14 March 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC) and the Network of National Coordination Centres (NCCs) were set up by Regulation (EU) 2021/887² (the ‘Founding Regulation’) that entered into force on 28 June 2021. It aims in particular to strengthen the capacities of the cybersecurity technology community, better protect our economy and society from cyber incidents, increase excellence in research and innovation, and reinforce the competitiveness of EU cyber industry.

The set-up of a new EU body is a complex process and until the ECCC reaches its full autonomy, the European Commission (EC) services have continued to carrying out the ECCC’s tasks on its behalf³. The ECCC staff recruited during 2022 and 2023 are gradually taking up duties.

The ECCC⁴ is mandated to design and implement, with the support of relevant stakeholders, a common agenda for the development and growth of the European industrial, technological and research sector in the area of cybersecurity, including SMEs and in areas of public interest. For this purpose, the ECCC implements parts of the Digital Europe⁵ (‘DEP’) and Horizon Europe⁶ (‘HEP’) funding programmes, establishing and implementing the respective work programmes in line with the relevant regulations. The ECCC aims to create a framework for strategic and coordinated investment in cybersecurity with contributions from the EU level, Member States and relevant cybersecurity constituencies, including industry and academia.

2023 was the second full-year of activity for the ECCC after its legal creation in mid-2021. During 2022, the ECCC initiated the rollout of operational tasks established by its founding Regulation, whilst strengthening its administrative and management structure as well as expanding its human and financial resources. During 2023, the ECCC made significant progress in all tasks and activities dedicated to establishment of the ECCC and delivered on the actual mandate of the ECCC. The activities carried out by the ECCC with the support of DG CONNECT include the adoption of the DEP and HEP work programmes 2021-2022, 2023-2024 as well as the evaluation of the calls for proposals, the signature of grants and the management of the projects retained for funding. The evaluation of calls for proposal involved significant workload over the course of 2022 and 2023⁷.

The Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) of ECCC for 2023 is more comprehensive than the first CAAR dedicated to reporting the 2022 activities of the Centre⁸. The Centre is closer to its financial autonomy and this

² Regulation (EU) 2021/887 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and the Network of National Coordination Centres (OJ L 202, 8.6.2021, p. 1), referred further in the document as founding/ECCC regulation.

³ Please see article 46 of the ECCC regulation (EU) 2021/887.

⁴ https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/index_en

⁵ Digital Europe Programme established by Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme and repealing Decision (EU) 2015/2240 (OJ L 166, 11.5.2021, p. 1).

⁶ Horizon Europe Programme established by Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 (OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 1).

⁷ Several evaluations took place, followed by the preparation and signature of the grant agreements. By now, several projects are already ongoing. During 2023, the ECCC new recruited staff started to gradually carry out part of the mentioned work. Until the ECCC reaches sufficient operational capacity and financial autonomy, EC services continued to act on behalf of the ECCC, contributing with the EC’s own resources. This includes preparing DEP and HEP work programmes by EC, although gradually shifting role in launching and evaluating calls for proposals for both programs to ECCC while in parallel managing alongside ECCC the projects selected for funding.

⁸ ECCC CAAR 2022 and related GB decision at: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/system/files/2024-01/ECCC%20GB%20Decision%20No%202023_7%20ECCC%20CAAR%202022.pdf

report covers outstanding results delivered by the ECCC with the support of the EC for the planned activities for 2023 covered in the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2023-2025⁹. The SPD covering the period 2023-2025 focuses, like the previous ones, on the operationalizing the ECCC (legal framework, administration, governance aspects, human resources, etc.) to be implemented in order to provide the ECCC with full operational capacity and autonomy for fulfilling its mandate.

As for the present document, its structure follows the guidelines for Consolidated Annual Activity Report as detailed in C(2020) 2297 final¹⁰, Annex 2, of the Communication from the Commission on the strengthening of the governance of Union Bodies under Article 70 of the Financial Regulation (EC) 2018/1046, and on the guidelines¹¹ for the SPD and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

In addition, this report covers the requirements of Article 27 of the ECCC regulation and a more detailed overview of the results to address these requirements is provided in Section 1.2 and in Annex IX.

The main achievements of the ECCC during 2023 include:

- Setting up activities related to achieving financial autonomy, including preparations for recruitments :
 - Progress on premises related activities and agreement with the host country; delivery of all preparatory work to facilitate functioning and operation of the ECCC in the temporary office of 9 May 2023;
 - The ECCC requirements for the Permanent Premises were issued. The development of the Fit-Out Plans for the Permanent Premises started and progressed during 2023;
 - Advancing on the headquarter agreement negotiation with host country with a forecast of finalization during Q1/2024;
 - Continue the recruitment and onboarding of staff members in Bucharest, reaching of 80% of occupancy by Q1/2024, including the appointment of the Executive Director (ED);
 - Preparation and approval of the ECCC reporting and programming documents: CAAR 2022, SPD for 2024-2026 and draft SPD 2025-2027.
- Operational activities, delivering on the core tasks of the ECCC:
 - Preparing the implementation of DEP, launching the relevant calls for proposals;
 - Running the evaluation of proposals received and signing grants agreement on several DEP topics;
 - Supporting the evaluation of proposals received under HE;
 - Running and monitoring projects under DEP and HEP.
- Strategic activities to empower the community and operationalize NCCs network;
 - Adoption of the Strategic Agenda of the ECCC;
 - Results of the several working groups under the GB;
 - Organizing 3 networking days and cooperation between NCCs and set up the Network of NCCs.

As can be seen from the bullets above, the ECCC increased its resources over the last months of 2023 and undertook many of the tasks foreseen in its founding Regulation, with a good forecast to reach financial autonomy during 2024. The ECCC, the NCCs and the Community will continue to steadily grow in the near future in view to deliver fully on their mission and objectives regarding cybersecurity investment, innovation and uptake, and thus help make the EU more cyber resilient and prosperous.

The ECCC operates in an evolving landscape of EU cybersecurity policy, including the recently adopted revision of the NIS Directive, the legislative proposals on a Cyber Resilience Act and on a Cyber Solidarity Act, policy initiatives

⁹ GB decision no 24/2022 on the ECCC SPD 2023-2025, available at: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/GB%20decision%20No%202022_24_ECCC%20SPD%202023-2025_Budget%202023.pdf

¹⁰ In pursuance of FR 2018/1046 and FFR No 2019/715, Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1).

¹¹ C(2020) 2297 final Annex 1, Annex to the Communication from the Commission on the strengthening of the governance of Union Bodies under Article 70 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 and on the guidelines for the Single Programming Document and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report

such as the Communications on cyber defence and on the Cyber Skills Academy, as well as funding support including calls for proposals launched in 2022 and 2023 under HEP and DEP. The ECCC, together with the NCCs and the Community are an important component of this overall effort to enhance cybersecurity capabilities and resilience in the EU.

Miguel González-Sancho

Interim Executive Director (September 2021-January 2024)

And

Luca Tagliaretti

Executive Director (from February 2024)

PART I. ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2023

The first part of this report details the objectives approved in the 2023 Work Programme¹² and presents the achievements of the ECCC during 2023. As stated in the 2023 Work Programme, the priorities for 2023 were:

- a substantial recruitment of staff members (over 20);
- completing the fulfilment of administrative and operational capabilities of the ECCC;
- completing the fitting-out and delivery of the headquarters premises.

Other activities mentioned as priorities in the 2023 Work Programme include:

- adoption of the Agenda of the ECCC;
- full roll-out and operation of the Network of NCCs and of the Cybersecurity Competence Community;
- and support to the implementation of Digital Europe Programme.

The next sections provide a view on the achievements or on the progress in the process of delivering these priorities. The structure of this Part I reflects the structure of the ECCC Work programme 2023, as adopted by the ECCC GB in the SPD 2023-2025 document and covers the achievements of the following activity domains:

- ✓ #1: Legal and operational activities for the setup of the ECCC,
- ✓ #2: Implementation of Digital Europe & Horizon Europe Programme,
- ✓ #3: Adoption of the Agenda, the Multiannual Work Programme and the Annual Work Programme, and
- ✓ #4: Activities related to the Network of National Coordination Centres and the Cybersecurity Competence Community.

1.1 Achieved results in ACTIVITY DOMAIN #1

Activity domain “#1: Legal and operational activities for the setup of the ECCC” is related to Objective #1 of the Multiannual Work Programme: “Achieve full financial autonomy”.

The completion of the setting-up of the ECCC, which started in the second half of 2021, was one of the main challenges for 2023 and several activities will continue in 2024. Once the establishment phase is over, the ECCC will become fully autonomous and will be able to focus on its operational tasks, benefitting from the governance structures, rules, procedures and infrastructure in place.

The table below provides an overview of the status of implementation of the section II.4 on Efficiency gains, of the multiannual planning 2023-2025. It should be noted that at the time of drafting of this report, it is estimated that ECCC will reach financial autonomy by Q3/2024.

Objectives	Expected results (as adopted in WP2023, multiannual section)	Achieved results by end of 2023
Premises/ Infrastructure	Fitting out and handover of the premises offered by the host state, in line with all necessary requirements	The Temporary Premises were delivered on 9 May 2023. The development of the Fit-Out Plans for the Permanent premises started in 2023 and will continue in 2024.
	Conclusion of an agreement regarding the premises with the Romanian Government	The Free Sublease Agreement was signed on 8 May 2023. An Addendum to the Sublease is expected to be signed in Q1 2024; the Addendum provides for an extension to the delivery of the permanent premises and temporary storage.
	Launching of negotiations and possible signature of the rental agreement with the Romanian Government regarding the permanent premises	The Free Sublease Agreement was signed on 8 May 2023. As mentioned above, an Addendum to the Sublease agreement is expected to be signed in Q1/2024.
	Launching the implementation of the fitting-out of the permanent building in line with all the necessary requirements	The ECCC requirements for the Permanent Premises were issued. The development of the Fit-Out Plans for the Permanent Premises started and progressed during 2023 ¹³ .

¹² Part of the ECCC SPD 2023-2025, available at: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/GB%20decision%20No%202022_24_ECCC%20SPD%202023-2025_Budget%202023.pdf

¹³ Delivery of permanent premises is envisaged during Q3/2024.

Objectives	Expected results (as adopted in WP2023, multiannual section)	Achieved results by end of 2023
Governance and management (structure, legal & procedural framework)	Submission of the relevant building file to European Parliament and Council, as necessary	In June a draft Note to the Budgetary Authority on ECCC's building project was prepared for DG BUDG's review and input.
	Finalisation of negotiations and signature of the Host Agreement with the Romanian Government	It is expected to finalise the wording of the draft Host Agreement in Q1/2024.
	Setting-up the necessary IT infrastructure for the ECCC operations	Printers, laptop computers, monitors and AV conferencing system already deployed in the Temporary Premises.
	Selection, appointment and take-up of duties of the ECCC ED	Selection process concluded with the election of the ED during GB meeting in October 2023. The ED will take up duties as of 1/02/2024.
	Adoption of programming documents	Completed Programming documents were discussed and then adopted by the ECCC GB ¹⁴ (ECCC GB Decision No GB/2023/8 on SPD 2024-2026 and ECCC GB Decision No GB/2023/9 on Draft SPD 2025-2027).
	Accelerate the registration of members of the EU Cybersecurity Competence Community	Pending. In the absence of the pre-requisite of the registered cyber community members, from which the members of the Strategic Advisory Group should be then appointed.
	Set-up of the Strategic Advisory Group (appointment of members, rules of procedure) after establishment of EU Cybersecurity Competence Community	Pending - Postponed due to lack of resources and tasks prioritisation over the year and considering the progress on ECCC operations. Nevertheless, the ECCC increased its communication activities throughout the year (on ECCC website, social media accounts and newsletter), mainly focusing on GB activity and publications of job vacancies. Ongoing process.
	Development of a public communication and dissemination policy	In progress. To be finalized in Q1/2024 after the arrival of new ED.
	Appointment of the Accounting Officer	Completed - ECCC GB Decision No GB/2023/2 on Appointment of Accounting Officer.
	Financial rules (tbc)	Completed. ECCC GB Decision No GB/2023/1 on ECCC Financial Rules (adopted early 2023) is currently under revision to include provisions in order to reflect the 'joint undertaking' nature of the ECCC tasks.
Adoption of the Internal control framework rules	ECCC GB Decision No GB/2023/12 on Internal Control Framework.	
Adoption of the Anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and protection measures for persons reporting on breaches of EU law	In progress. To be adopted in anticipation of financial autonomy.	
Rules for the prevention, identification and resolution of conflicts of interest in respect of its members, bodies and staff, including the ED and the GB members, and SAG members (tbc)	Completed, ECCC GB Decision No GB/2023/4 on Conflict of Interest.	
Adoption of the ECCC's Security rules	In progress. To be adopted after the move to the final premises	
Staff	Rules on the secondment of SNEs and the use of trainees	Pending – Expected to be completed by Q4/2024.
	ECCC's financial autonomy validation	In progress. It is envisioned that autonomy will be reached by Q3/2024.
	Approval of working arrangements between the ECCC and EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies (e.g. ENISA, EEAS, JRC, REA, HADEA, Europol, EDA etc.) and international organisations, where relevant	SLAs are signed with: EPSO, HR, PMO, DIGIT, EUAN and ENISA. SLAs pending signature with REA, CERT-EU and services of EC: BUDG, SG, CDT, RTD. A MoU signed with ENISA.
	Adoption of further HR-related legal framework (e.g. implementing rules to the Staff Regulations and to the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the EU-CEOS)	Most of the implementing rules are adopted by the GB. GB Decision on working time and hybrid working is in progress.
	Selection and recruitment of staff members of the ECCC	In progress. 71% of posts were occupied at the end of 2023; few new staff are expected to start during Q1/2024, including the new ED, reaching this way 80% posts occupied.

1.2 Achieved results in ACTIVITY DOMAIN #2

This section covers the activity domain “#2: Implementation of Digital Europe and Horizon Europe Programme”. The activities delivered under this chapter are related to Objective #2 of the Multiannual Work Programme: “Implement DEP and, where relevant, HE”.

¹⁴ Please find all ECCC GB decisions at: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/governing-board_en

The actions under Specific Objective 3 (Cybersecurity and Trust) of the Digital Europe Programme are implemented primarily through the ECCC and the Network of NCCs. Until the ECCC reaches financial autonomy, the Commission services acts and will continue to act on behalf of the ECCC¹⁵. Gradually, starting with 2023, those tasks are transferred to the ECCC according to ECCC administrative capacity.

Important actions undertaken in this activity area in 2023 include the following:

Objectives	Expected results (as adopted in WP2023)	Achieved results by end of 2023
Programme implementation	EC implementing DEP calls on behalf of the ECCC for WP 2023-2024 (take financing decisions, launch calls, organise evaluations, conclude grant agreements)	Completed. Gradually, the new ECCC staff supported and then took lead on launching calls, organizing evaluations and concluding grant agreements.
	Annotated Model grant agreement adoption	Completed at EC level (not at Agency level). For both DEP and HE there are already approved MGAs by the EC for 21-27 programmes.
	Where necessary, development of approach/ methodology to calculate MS in-kind contribution	Pending. Postponed due to the status of progress on ECCC operations.
	Identify possible Joint Actions to be supported by contributions from some MS and by EU budget from DEP or HEP.	Pending. Postponed due to the status of progress on ECCC operations.

The ECCC Work Programme is sourced from the Digital Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 for Cybersecurity.

The actions contained in the Digital Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 are aimed to build up advanced cybersecurity equipment, tools and data infrastructure. They support the development and best use of European knowledge and skills related to cybersecurity, promote the sharing of best practices and ensure a wide deployment of the state-of-the-art cybersecurity solutions across the European economy to guarantee the resilience, integrity and trustworthiness of the Digital Single Market.

The budget for the Cybersecurity actions covered by the Digital Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 is EUR 375 million, distributed as follows:

- A budget of EUR 89 million for actions related to building capacities of Security Operation Centres;
- A budget of EUR 35 million for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Key Technologies in Cybersecurity.
- A budget of EUR 30 million for actions relating to the implementation of the proposed Cyber Resilience Act.
- A budget of EUR 24 million for actions relation to the transition to Post-Quantum Cryptography.
- A budget of EUR 70 million for actions in relations to the Cybersecurity Emergency Mechanism component on preparedness and mutual assistance, in line with the proposed Cyber Solidarity Act;
- A budget of EUR 3 million for coordination between the Cybersecurity Civilian and Defence Spheres;
- A budget of EUR 3 million for standardisation in the area of cybersecurity;
- A budget of EUR 50 million for support for implementation of EU legislation on cybersecurity and National Cybersecurity Strategies;
- A budget of EUR 65 million for actions to be carried out by National Coordination Centres;
- A budget of EUR 6 million for programme support actions, including evaluations and reviews.

The following tables summarises the ECCC calls and topics, under the **Digital Europe Programme**, opened in 2023.

For the topics under *DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03* call which closed in 2023, the grants have been all signed and operations have started.

TOPIC	Budget	Closing Date	Outcome
1. European "Cyber-Shield"			
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE EU Cybersecurity Resilience, Coordination and Cybersecurity Ranges	EUR 3.416.320,50	July 2023	Signed
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC Capacity building of Security Operation Centres	EUR 26.310.858,19	July 2023	Signed
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS Uptake of Innovative Cybersecurity Solutions	EUR 6.759.458,84	July 2023	Signed

¹⁵ See Article 46 of the ECCC regulation.

For the topics under *DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04* call, which closed later in 2023 using 2023 budget, the grants are in preparation phase and will be signed by June 2024.

TOPIC	Budget	Closing Date	Outcome
1. Cybersecurity Emergency Mechanism			
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST Preparedness support and mutual assistance	EUR 35M	September 2023	GAP phase
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-STANDARDISATION Standardisation in the area of Cybersecurity	EUR 3M	September 2023	GAP phase
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-CIVIL-DEFENCE Coordination between the cybersecurity civilian and defence spheres	EUR 3M	September 2023	GAP phase
2. Support to EU legislation			
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION Support for implementation of EU legislation on cybersecurity and national cybersecurity strategies	EUR 30M	September 2023	GAP phase

The following paragraphs provide insights on of the calls with the outcome available at the end of 2023:

- ✓ **18 DEP projects** funded from the call *DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03*. From the overall EU contribution of € 36.314.012,21 it was provided already a pre-financing of € 29.051.180,45 (80%).

Topic	Id	Acronym	Start Date	End Date	Duration (months)	EU contribution (EUR)
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE	101145872	NITRO	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.000.476,75
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE	101145867	OT_EarWarnSys	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.850.703,83
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145856	BinConf SOC	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.270.812,25
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145725	C-SOC	01-01-2024	31-12-2027	48	1.000.557
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145847	CCC	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.412.935
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145851	CybAirSOC	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.863.405
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145879	Cyber-CORE-Network	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.775.586,36
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145853	INTERSOC	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	3.283.280,56
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145874	NG-SOC	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	2.386.406,55
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145846	SAFE4SoC	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	3.550.550,68
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145843	SOCcare	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	2.194.570
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	101145844	VIG CDC	01-08-2023	31-01-2026	30	4.655.125,95
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	101145884	BUILDSAFEMARC	01-01-2024	30-06-2025	18	1.617.438,75
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	101145861	CyberSuite	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	2.998.854,23
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	101145859	Excalibur VITRO	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.000.397,3
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	101145866	IXTrust Platform	01-01-2024	31-12-2026	36	1.553.640
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	101145876	GAMO CYBERplace	01-01-2024	31-12-2025	24	1.244.517
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	101145877	PHACKS	01-10-2023	30-09-2026	36	1.654.755

- ✓ **12 DEP projects** from the call *DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04* are in Grant Agreement Preparation phase and are expected to be funded by June 2024.

Topic	ID number	Acronym	Start Date	End Date	Duration (months)	Requested EU contribution (EUR)
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-CIVIL-DEFENCE	101158606	COCyber	N/A	N/A	24	2.973.155,50
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-CIVIL-DEFENCE	101158784	ECYBRIDGE	N/A	N/A	24	2.493.118,19
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	101158808	HEP-OTSEC	N/A	N/A	18	1.248.155,00
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	101158692	ENIAC	N/A	N/A	36	4.499.134,93
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	101158662	SafebyRaiffeisen	N/A	N/A	36	2.576.129,00
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	101158491	IOTCMS	N/A	N/A	36	2.674.953,99
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	101158687	TrustBoost	N/A	N/A	36	1.584.509,51
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	101158539	CRACoWi	N/A	N/A	36	4.226.735,40
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-STANDARDISATION	101158521	CYBERSTAND.eu	N/A	N/A	36	2.999.999,09
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST	101158555	CyberSynchrony	N/A	N/A	36	6.998.153,10
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST	101158605	EUDOROS	N/A	N/A	36	6.973.237,08
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST	101158535	CRESCENDO	N/A	N/A	48	6.573.844,60
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST	101158471	CYSSDE	N/A	N/A	48	6.984.087,55

- ✓ The Deployment Actions in the area of Cybersecurity *DIGITAL-ECCC-2024-DEPLOY-CYBER-06* (6 topics) with an overall EU contribution € 84 million, was published in December 2023 and opened on 16 January 2024. It will

close on 26 March 2024 and evaluation is expected to take place in April 2024. Grants will be signed by November 2024.

- ✓ Around 10 projects are expected to be funded for **Horizon Europe programme**, under the Increased Cybersecurity 2023 *HORIZON-CL3-2023-CS-01* call (3 topics) with an overall EU contribution € 58.7 million. The call opened on 29 June 2023, closed on 23 November 2023, and evaluations will take place in January 2024. Grants are expected to be signed by July 2024.

Annex IX provides more detailed operational and financial reporting data regarding the calls, the SMEs and the MS applying for grants or receiving grants.

1.3 Achieved results in ACTIVITY DOMAIN #3

This section covers the activity domain “#3: *Adoption of the Agenda, the Multiannual Work Programme and the Annual Work Programme*”. The activities described under this chapter are related to Objective #3 of the Multiannual Work Programme “*Develop, implement and monitor the Agenda of the ECCC, the multiannual work programme and the annual work programme*”.

During March 2023 GB meeting, the ECCC GB adopted the Strategic Agenda of ECCC as required by the article 2 point (8) of the Establishing Regulation. The EC initiated the process of drafting the ECCC’s Agenda, in close cooperation with the ECCC Governing Board and the Network. During 2023, based on the Strategic Agenda, an Action Plan was initiated and is expected to be finalized in Q1/2024. The Action Plan will provide a consolidated perspective of ECCC GB and MS on the actions and priorities for the research and innovation in the DE and HE programmes. The Action Plan – steamed from the Strategic Agenda – will define the priorities for the Digital Europe and, to the extent that they are co-financed by the Member States, also the priorities for the Horizon Europe programme. These work programmes will include, where relevant, joint actions between the ECCC and Member States.

The annual work programmes of the ECCC are/will be define, in accordance with the strategic Agenda and the Action Plan.

Important actions undertaken in this activity area during 2023 include the following:

Objectives	Expected results (as adopted in WP2023)	Achieved results by end of 2023
Agenda	Adoption of the agenda, following consultation with all relevant actors (EC, NCCs, Community, ENISA, SAG)	Completed. The Strategic Agenda that was adopted by the GB of ECCC in March 2023 ¹⁶ .
	Once adopted, monitoring the implementation of the Agenda	In progress. Since the Strategic Agenda was adopted, the new/updated programming documents were aligned. Monitoring will follow in the next years.
Multiannual work programme & Annual work programme	Development, adoption and monitoring of the multiannual work programme and the annual work programme	Completed. SPD 2024-2026 and Draft SPD 2025-2027 were developed in consultation with GB and adopted by GB in October 2023.

1.4 Achieved results in ACTIVITY DOMAIN #4

This section covers the activity domain “#4: *Activities related to the Network of National Coordination Centres and the Cybersecurity Competence Community*”. The activities described under this chapter are related to Objective #4 of the Multiannual Work Programme “*Build and coordinate the Network of National Coordination Centres and the Cybersecurity Competence Community*”.

¹⁶ The Strategic Agenda is available at: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/strategic-agenda_en

The Network of NCCs is composed of all the National Coordination Centres that are notified to the Governing Board by the Member States (Article 6.7 of the Regulation). They function as contact points at the national level for the Cybersecurity Competence Community and the ECCC (Article 7.1(a) of the Regulation). When preparing this report, all EU MS notified about the setup of the national NCCs.

A number of deliverables in this area were delivered or are in progress as part of the European Cybersecurity Community Support project (ECCO).

The actions undertaken in 2023 in this activity area include the following:

Objectives	Expected results (as adopted in WP2023)	Achieved results by end of 2023
Network of National Coordination Centres	Completion of the setting-up of the Network and smooth functioning as an integrated Network	Completed. By the end of 2023 all MS had notified their NCCs.
	Creation of an indicative “service catalogue” for NCCs	In progress. The tasks assigned to the NCCs by Article 7 of the ECCC Regulation are progressively being implemented.
	Further definition of modalities of interaction between the ECCC and the Network of NCCs (coordination mechanisms – alignment of activities - Organisation of workshops/recurrent meetings, etc.)	In progress. At the NCC Day in October 2023, both Chair and Vice-Chair of the NCC Network were elected and the Rules of Procedure for the Network were established and approved. The ECCC and ECCO staff discussed the modalities of interaction with NCCs with the Network Chair. This work is expected to continue during 2024. Operational support to the mission of the NCCs and their functioning as a Network came online in 2023: access to the platform Mattermost for NCCs was implemented, allowing leaner virtual communication and collaboration among NCCs and with ECCC. Several NCC meetings were organized (see below “NCC meetings and interactions” table).
Cybersecurity Competence Community (stakeholders)	Establishment of the Cybersecurity Competence Community	In progress. The Community should involve a large, open, and diverse group of actors involved in cybersecurity technology, including in particular research entities, supply/demand-side industries and the public sector. The Community will be composed of entities registered in the European Cybersecurity Atlas. As required by Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/887, the Atlas is currently being revamped to allow NCCs to assess the data of registration requests before publication. Technical implementation towards this end is being finalized, with the first registrations expected in the beginning of 2024.
	Establishment of working groups, and support	In progress. As the Community registration project is being finalized, no working group of the cyber community was set up as foreseen in the ECCC Regulation. However, the GB set up several working groups according to its own rules of procedure (see below “Status and activities of the NCC Working Groups”).
	Set up an EU “cybersecurity market observatory”	In progress. As part of its Task A, ECCO presented to ECCC a Prototype of the Market Observatory. The prototype was also presented to the NCCs in October 2023. Once perfected, the Market Observatory will be accessible to the NCCs for testing during second year of the project (in 2024).

In order to cover the areas of ECCC activities, a number of Working Groups (WG) have been established. The following table lists the WGs and provides an update of their activities.

WG	Focus area	Activities and status
WG 1	Community registration: Evolution and Security Clearance questions	WG1 focuses on community registration and on the related question of security clearance. During 2023, the WG produced a working document outlining guidelines for registration and has been working to establish common criteria for community assessment. At the latest NCC Day (Athens, 11th October 2023), WG1 presented their planned initiatives going forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the core document titled "ECCC WG1: Community evolution and security clearance questions" and disseminate it within the Network. Encourage NCCs to initiate assessments of entities based on their acquired knowledge and encourage the sharing of information, best practices, and common tools among all NCCs.
WG 2	NCC Network Governance and Community animation	WG2 did not meet during 2023. At the NCC Day in October 2023, the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Community Network were elected, and the Rules of Procedure for the Network were approved. On these basis, it is expected that activities in this area be ramped up during 2024.
WG 3	NCC Network functioning	WG3 deals with community management and NCC network overall functioning. During 2023, the WG has been focusing on the technical process and Atlas workflow for community registration.
WG 4	Strategic Agenda	WG4 focuses on identifying priorities within the strategic agenda. The WG circulated a survey in 2023 to all NCCs and is expected to provide a final report, in cooperation with ENISA and ECCO, by the GB meeting in March 2024.
WG 5	Cyber Skills	WG5 launched different surveys, requesting feedback on topics such as: content of certification and training repository; attestation schemes in different MS; and mapping of how EU and other funds are already used for skills. WG5 adopted their ToRs during the last GB meeting (October 2023).
WG 6	Collaboration with Ukraine	WG6 did not meet during 2023. The WG is expected to provide a report at the next GB Meeting in March 2024.
WG 7	Security Operations Centres (SOCs)	WG7 did not meet during 2023. Eleven Member States are part of the two existing platforms for cross-border SOCs. The grants were signed at the end of 2023; joint procurement will be initiated in 2024. It is anticipated that the WG7 become more active again from the first quarter of 2024.

During 2023, the Network of NCCs had regular meetings and interactions, taking over its tasks as set out in the founding Regulation, and functioning as an integrated Network.

In particular, three NCC Days were held (see table below). NCC Days are meetings of the NCC representatives, usually held in connection to Governing Board meetings to allow networking and live discussion on common issues, as well as to increase visibility of EU cybersecurity expertise, products and services.

NCC 5th Meeting 15 March 2023, Warsaw	NCCs discussed the state of play at the national level and main activities planned for 2023. NCCs were also briefed by ECCO on the status of the European Cybersecurity Community Support project. Furthermore, the NCCs discussed (a) Rules of functioning of the Network; (b) Community assessment and registration; and (c) NCCs reference manual.
NCC 6th Meeting 7 June 2023, Bucharest	NCCs received an update by ECCO and ENISA, as well as updates from the various Working Groups. They discussed common issues of interest, bringing case studies and best practices, including Financial Support to Third Parties and Skills. Operational matters were also discussed, such as the Rules of Procedure for the Network and the Single Programming Document. Finally, the incoming funding opportunities were discussed.
NCC 7th Meeting 11 October 2023, Athens	Together with the usual reporting from ECCO, ENISA and the Working Groups, which included a pilot presentation of the upcoming European Cybersecurity Atlas, NCC had the opportunity to suggest topics for discussion, which were then addressed in the plenary. These included the implementation and execution of FSTPs; cyber education and skills; NCC action and plans for 2024; operational issues in collaboration between NCCs and with ECCC, ECCO and ENISA; and supporting consortia in upcoming DEP calls.

PART II. MANAGEMENT

2.1. Governing Board

During 2023 three official meetings of the GB were organized.

During these meetings a number of important decisions and topics were covered¹⁷ which are necessary for the functioning of the Centre. This included the DPO and the Accounting officer appointments. In 2023, the GB adopted the Internal Control Framework, the SPD 2022-2024, the draft SPD 2023-2025 and the associated budget. Other decisions covered the public access to documents process (PAD) or the set-up of specific working groups of the GB dedicated to areas of interest as well as the Rules and Procedures for the NCCs.

2.2. Major Developments

After a preparation phase in 2022, where the Governing Board and the European Commission set the preliminary foundations, the Centre has made tremendous progress this year and became largely operational. One year ago, the Centre had no staff and no operational tasks; at the end of 2023 it had 27 employees (there will be 30 on 1 March 2024), majority operating from the ECCC own premises in Bucharest, managing calls for proposals and projects on cybersecurity funded with millions of euros from the Digital Europe Programme.

The Centre adopted in March 2023 its first strategic agenda for EU investment in cybersecurity, signed many new grants this year and has just published a new call for proposals, which will be followed by other calls for more grants and joint procurements in 2024.

Member States and countries associated to the ECCC have set up their National Coordination Centres, in most cases supported by EU funding, which significantly increased their activity throughout the year. They have also structured cooperation amongst themselves through the Network of NCCs, which started to meet regularly in 2023, and several working groups.

The Governing Board formally met 3 times during 2023, providing strategic guidance to the ECCC and adopting decisions necessary for the ECCC to operate, including the selection of the future Executive Director Mr. Luca Tagliaretti, who takes up his duties as of February 2023.

In 2024 the Centre will reach cruising speed: managing more funding, recruiting a few more employees (the current establishment plan foresees 38 staff), moving to permanent premises and becoming financially autonomous from the European Commission.

The establishment and setting up of the ECCC is taking place in a dynamic cybersecurity political context. Within this broader framework of EU policy priorities in cybersecurity, the ECCC will pool resources from the EU, MS and other constituencies to improve and strengthen technological and industrial cybersecurity capacities, enhancing the EU's open strategic autonomy, and offering a possibility to consolidate part of the cybersecurity-related activities funded under HEP and DEP.

The ECCC and the Network of NCCs will contribute to maximising the effects of investments to strengthen the EU's leadership and open strategic autonomy in the field of cybersecurity and support technological capacities, capabilities and skills, and to increase the EU's global competitiveness. They will do so with input from industry and academic communities in cybersecurity, including SMEs and research centres, which will benefit from a more systematic, inclusive and strategic collaboration, having regard to the cohesion of the EU and all of its MS. The

¹⁷ For a complete list of decisions and minutes of GB meetings please visit the page dedicated to GB on ECCC website: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/governing-board_en

ECCC, the Network and the Community will benefit from the experience and the collaboration of the relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, the ECCC shall cooperate with relevant EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, in particular with ENISA, in order to ensure consistency and complementarity while avoiding any duplication of effort.

In general, the objectives of ECCC and the work carried out by now by ECCC reflect the EU's policy priorities, while containing common, industrial, technology and research priorities which are based on the needs identified by MS in cooperation with the Community and which require the focus of EU financial support, including key technologies and domains for developing the EU's own capabilities in cybersecurity (Article 13 of the ECCC Regulation).

2.3. Budgetary and financial management

As the ECCC is not financially autonomous, all financial transactions were implemented in accordance with the standard operating procedures and checks in place by the European Commission – DG CONNECT.

2.4. Delegation and sub-delegation

Not applicable. During 2023, DG CONNECT Directorate H Director acted as authorizing officers by sub-delegation for ECCC budget.

2.5 Human Resources (HR) management

The Staff Regulations and Conditions of Employment apply to the staff of the ECCC.

During 2023 71% of the employees of the establishment plan started working for ECCC. The majority of the ECCC staff is working in the temporary ECCC headquarters in Bucharest, after temporary being hosted by the Commission Representation in Bucharest. Transitory measures are still in place for the time being until the move to final premises in Bucharest. Further recruitments will continue in 2024.

ECCC has concluded several SLAs with the Commission services such as DG HR, PMO or EPSO, which were required for the recruitment of staff. In addition, the relevant implementing rules governing the recruitment and employment matters have been put in place.

Recruitment policy. All implementing rules required for recruitment are in place:

- Engagement of CAs, Model Decision C(2019)3016
- Engagement of TAs, Model Decision C(2015)1509
- Middle management staff, Model decision C(2018)2542
- Types of post, Model Decision C(2018)8800

Further HR related rules have been adopted by the GB¹⁸.

Given the stage of growth of the ECCC in 2023 and the number of staff that took up duties, it is too early to determine the numbers relating to the Inter-agency screening/benchmarking methodology (i.e. overheads/operational ratio).

2.6. Strategy for efficiency gains

The ECCC is committed to continuously implement measures to obtain efficiency gains in all activities.

Whenever possible, the ECCC will continue seeking synergies and the most efficient ways of action.

¹⁸ For a complete list of decisions taken by GB, please visit the page dedicated to GB on ECCC website: https://cybersecurity-centre.europa.eu/governing-board_en

Since July 2022, the ECCC is an observer of the EU Agencies Network (EUAN, of which full membership requires financial autonomy), which gives access to a Network of agencies, JUs (Joint Undertakings) and other EU bodies, and the opportunity to exchange knowledge and best practices on horizontal issues for EU bodies. SLAs with EPSO, HR, PMO and DIGIT are in place.

In 2023 the ECCC and ENISA signed a service level agreement (SLA) regarding shared services (i.e. Data Protection Officer and Accounting Officer services). In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with ENISA in October 2023 with the aim to synchronize cybersecurity related activities.

Please also see Annex VI for other SLAs signed or in preparation.

2.7 Assessment of audit and ex-post evaluation results during the reporting year

Not yet applicable.

2.8 a Follow up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations

Not yet applicable.

2.8 b Follow up of recommendations issued following investigations of OLAF

Not yet applicable.

2.9 Follow up of observations from discharge authority

Not yet applicable.

2.10 Environment management

Not yet applicable. Please see Annex VII.

2.11. Assessment by management

Not yet applicable. ECCC has been established in 2021 and it is not financially autonomous yet. Furthermore, the ECCC has to recruit more staff including on managerial positions.

PART III. ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

3.1 Effectiveness of internal control systems

In accordance with Article 46 of ECCC founding Regulation (EU) 2021/887, the Commission is responsible for the establishment and initial operation of the ECCC until it reaches financial autonomy. This includes all financial transactions and the responding exception reports. Compliance with the Internal Control Framework of the Commission is a compulsory requirement applicable.

During 2023 the Internal Control Framework (ICF) of ECCC was adopted by the Governing Board of ECCC.

3.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

The assessment of the internal control system is the responsibility of the Commission and will be reflected in the relevant section of the Annual Activity Report of DG CONNECT.

3.3 Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

The ECCC has been established in 2021 and it is not financially autonomous at the end of 2023. Furthermore, the ECCC has to recruit more staff and appoint a manager in charge of risk management and internal control.

PART IV. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

Until it reaches financial autonomy, the Commission is responsible for the establishment and initial operation of ECCC.

PART V. DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned, interim Executive Director¹⁹ of ECCC, in my capacity as authorising officer,

- Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.*
- State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.*

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment and ex-post controls.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the agency.

Brussels, 14/05/2024

(e-signed)

Miguel GONZALEZ-SANCHO

Interim Executive Director (September 2021 – January 2024)

¹⁹ Mr. Miguel Gonzalez-Sancho is the interim Executive Director of ECCC for the financial year 2023 and will remain authorizing officer by sub-delegation, even after the recruitment of the Executive Director, until ECCC has the operational capacity to implement its own budget (Article 46 of ECCC founding Regulation (EU) 2021/887).

ANNEXES

Annex I. Core business statistics

The Regulation entered into force on 28 June 2021. Since then, DG CONNECT of the EC has been working on the establishment of the ECCC. From the beginning, the EC services acted on behalf of the ECCC, and will continue doing so until the ECCC reaches full financial autonomy.

After a preparation phase in 2022, where the Governing Board and the European Commission set the preliminary foundations, the Centre has really taken off during 2023, becoming largely operational. By end of 2023, the Centre has 27 employees (30 by first March 2024), majority operating from the ECCC temporary premises in Bucharest, managing calls for proposals and projects on cybersecurity funded with millions of euros from the Digital Europe Programme.

The Centre adopted in March 2023 its first strategic agenda for EU investment in cybersecurity, signed many new grants this year and has just published a new call for proposals, which will be followed by other calls for more grants and joint procurements in 2024.

Member States and countries associated to the ECCC have set up their National Coordination Centres, in most cases supported by EU funding, which significantly increased their activity throughout 2023. They have also structured cooperation amongst themselves through the Network of NCCs, which started to meet regularly in 2023, and several working groups.

The Governing Board formally met 3 times in 2023, providing strategic guidance to the ECCC and adopting decisions necessary for the ECCC to operate, including the selection of the Executive Director Luca Tagliaretti, who takes up his duties as of February 2024.

Annex II. Statistics on financial management

The ECCC Funding Regulation entered into force on 28 June 2021. Since then, DG CONNECT of the EC has been working on the establishment of the ECCC, together with the staff members recruited by ECCC in 2022 and 2023.

As defined in the founding Regulation, the ECCC shall in principle be funded by the EU, while joint actions shall be funded by the EU and by voluntary contributions from MS.

Generally, the EU contribution shall be paid from the appropriations in the EU general budget allocated to Cybersecurity activities in the DEP Programme, the specific programme implementing HEP established by Decision (EU) 2021/764 and other relevant EU programmes, as needed for the implementation of the tasks or the achievement of the objectives of the ECCC, subject to decisions taken in accordance with the legal acts of the EU establishing those programmes.

This section, including the specific financial and budget parameters, will be developed next financial year following the attainment of the financial autonomy.

Annex III. Organizational chart

Soon after the entering into force of the Regulation, an Interim ED was appointed. The recruitment of the permanent ED was launched in 2022 and the first staff members were recruited in 2022. A large number of recruitments continued over the course of 2023, and this process of recruitment brings the number of ECCC staff by 1 March 2024 to 30, including the new elected ED. During 2024 the remaining staff will be recruited to reach the total of 38 staff members.

Annex IV. Establishment plan and additional information on Human Resources management

The Staff Regulations and Conditions of Employment apply to the staff of the ECCC.

The first staff recruitments took place in 2022: two ECCC staff members started working in 2022 and 26 other staff members joined in 2023 following recruitment processes initiated in 2022 and 2023.

During 2023 the majority of employees started working at the temporary headquarters ECCC headquarters in Bucharest, after temporary being hosted by the Commission Representation in Bucharest. At the same time, one staff member and the interim director were working from Brussels. Further recruitments are envisaged for 2024.

Recruitment policy. All implementing rules required for recruitment are in place. Further HR related rules might be adopted by the GB.

In the course of 2023 the recruitment continued, focusing on operational tasks while many administrative and support tasks were covered by the Commission services. Towards the end of 2023, several administrative and support staff started their contracts. Furthermore, the **job screening /benchmarking against previous years** will be initiated most likely in 2024, based on first analysis carried out in 2023 results.

Annex V. Human and financial resources by activity

Most of activities were carried out by the Commission services and reporting was done according to Commission's objectives and is not covered here.

Annex VI. Contribution, grant and service level agreements. Financial Framework Partnership Agreements

The ECCC does not receive any form of grant. The ECCC initiated in 2021 the process of concluding a number of SLAs and agreements that the ECCC has to undertake during the establishment phase in order to launch recruitments and reach operational autonomy. The list below provides an overview. The preparatory work started in 2021 and has resulted to concrete agreements in the course of 2022 and 2023²⁰.

Title	Type	Contractor	Status
Global SLA with DIGIT	SLA	EUROPEAN COMMISSION / DIGIT	<i>Signed</i>
SLA with DG HR	SLA	EUROPEAN COMMISSION / DG HR	<i>Signed</i>
SLA with PMO	SLA	EUROPEAN COMMISSION / PMO	<i>Signed</i>
SLA with EPSO	SLA	EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE (EPSO)	<i>Signed</i>
SLA with EU Agencies Network	SLA	EUROPEAN COMMISSION / SG AGENCES	<i>Signed</i>
SLA with ENISA	SLA	ENISA	<i>Signed</i>
<i>Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Service Delivery Agreement with DG Budget Implementation and usage of ABAC System</i>	SLA	<i>EUROPEAN COMMISSION / DG BUDG</i>	<i>Under preparation</i>
<i>SLA with CERT-EU</i>	SLA	<i>EUROPEAN COMMISSION/ DIGIT</i>	<i>Under preparation</i>
<i>SLA with SG</i>	SLA	<i>EUROPEAN COMMISSION/ SG</i>	<i>Under preparation</i>
<i>SLA with STD</i>	SLA	STD	<i>Under preparation</i>
<i>SLA with RTD</i>	SLA	RTD	<i>Under preparation</i>
<i>SLA with REA</i>	SLA	REA	<i>Under preparation</i>

Annex VII. Environment management

An approach to address the environmental impact of ECCC will be developed after the move of ECCC in its permanent premises.

²⁰ Status for January 2024.

The ECCC headquarters are in Bucharest. The initial procedure for the selection of the building which was launched in 2021 was inconclusive. The Romanian Government offered a new solution for the temporary premises of the ECCC, available to serve the ECCC's needs from May 2023 and the permanent premises are expected to be available during second part of 2024. The process will follow the specific provisions regarding building projects as indicated in Article 266 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU.

Annex VIII. Annual Accounts

The ECCC was established in 2021 and is not yet financially autonomous. Until it reaches financial autonomy, ECCC is not presenting autonomous Annual accounts. The Commission (DG CONNECT) is responsible for the initial financial transactions of the ECCC.

Annex IX. Additional data According to Article 27 reporting requirements

Annex IX provides quantitative data on submissions and selections and breakdown by participant type, including SMEs and Member States. For each of the 3 call launched during 2023 there are 3 tables presenting the type of applicants, the SME participation and also the MS participation.

A. DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03

Applicants' activity type

Topic	Number of participants from Higher or secondary education in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Higher or secondary education in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Research organisations in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Research organisations in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Private for profit organisations (excl. education) in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Private for profit organisations (excl. education) in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Public body (excl. research and education) in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Public body (excl. research and education) in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Other type of organisation in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Other type of organisation in retained for funding proposals	Total number of participants in evaluated proposals	Total number of participants in retained for funding proposals
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-TEST-CERT-CAPABILITIES	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	5	3
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-NIS-DIRECTIVE	1	1	1	0	6	2	10	10	9	4	27	17
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE	11	6	6	5	22	14	9	7	7	2	55	34
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	17	11	5	4	118	57	12	5	26	12	178	89
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-SOC	11	11	4	4	38	22	33	29	5	3	91	69
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-SOC	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	6	0
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-NAT-COORDINATION	4	3	4	1	3	1	25	16	5	4	41	25
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-SEC-5G-INFRASTRUCTURE	5	5	3	2	9	9	10	8	0	0	27	24
TOTAL	52	37	25	18	198	105	102	76	53	25	430	261

SME participation

Topic	Number of SMEs in evaluated proposals	Total requested EU contribution of SMEs in evaluated proposals	Number of SMEs in retained for funding proposals	Total requested EU contribution of SMEs in retained for funding proposals
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE	19	12,000,083.25 €	11	6,602,107.25 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-SOC	2	241,820.00 €	0	
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-NAT-COORDINATION	2	1,088,885.50 €	1	55,907.50 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-NIS-DIRECTIVE	6	1,637,934.60 €	3	829,817.10 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-SEC-5G-INFRASTRUCTURE	8	1,780,640.50 €	8	1,780,640.50 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-SOC	15	17,016,805.50 €	10	7,775,047.50 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-TEST-CERT-CAPABILITIES	0		0	
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	108	54,390,253.96 €	55	24,466,804.96 €
TOTAL	160	88,156,423.31 €	88	41,510,324.81 €

Country participation and share of requested EU contribution

Country Group	Country	Number of participations in evaluated proposals	Number of participations in retained for funding proposals	Requested EU contribution in retained for funding proposals
Associated Countries	Iceland	13	13	4,166,632.97 €
Associated Countries	Norway	7	7	5,312,100.72 €
Associated Countries	Total	20	20	9,478,733.69 €
EU Member States	Austria	14	5	2,457,668.02 €
EU Member States	Belgium	28	15	5,019,397.82 €
EU Member States	Bulgaria	11	4	1,871,197.45 €
EU Member States	Croatia	12	9	5,310,295.67 €
EU Member States	Cyprus	25	25	7,103,965.15 €
EU Member States	Czechia	9	5	2,026,914.40 €
EU Member States	Denmark	3	2	5,936,921.00 €
EU Member States	Estonia	10	7	2,410,064.26 €
EU Member States	Finland	1	1	0.00 €
EU Member States	France	26	13	6,996,781.60 €
EU Member States	Germany	14	7	4,854,633.91 €
EU Member States	Greece	56	51	19,359,429.75 €
EU Member States	Hungary	2	1	252,252.00 €
EU Member States	Ireland	5	4	7,779,450.40 €
EU Member States	Italy	25	8	2,999,852.00 €
EU Member States	Latvia	9	4	2,000,000.00 €
EU Member States	Lithuania	15	5	1,945,837.80 €
EU Member States	Luxembourg	10	7	3,427,941.35 €
EU Member States	Malta	5	1	199,490.80 €
EU Member States	Netherlands	14	9	3,088,183.18 €
EU Member States	Poland	26	8	4,012,388.19 €
EU Member States	Portugal	12	3	667,145.00 €
EU Member States	Romania	34	25	7,702,568.88 €
EU Member States	Slovakia	16	12	9,156,015.04 €
EU Member States	Slovenia	2	1	310,567.00 €
EU Member States	Spain	14	4	3,908,890.29 €
EU Member States	Sweden	9	5	2,461,929.83 €
EU Member States	Total	407	241	113,259,780.79 €
GRAND TOTAL		427	261	122,738,514.48 €

B. DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B_03

Applicants' activity type

Topic	Number of participants from Higher or secondary education in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Higher or secondary education in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Research organisations in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Research organisations in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Private for profit organisations (excl. education) in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Private for profit organisations (excl. education) in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Public body (excl. research and education) in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Public body (excl. research and education) in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Other type of organisation in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Other type of organisation in retained for funding proposals	Total number of participants in evaluated proposals	Total number of participants in retained for funding proposals
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE	8	2	2	0	10	3	3	0	5	1	28	6
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	3	0	2	0	49	15	2	0	10	0	66	15
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	7	7	6	6	49	37	8	2	1	0	71	52
TOTAL	18	9	10	6	108	55	13	2	16	1	165	73

SME participation

Topic	Number of SMEs in evaluated proposals	Total requested EU contribution of SMEs in evaluated proposals	Number of SMEs in retained for funding proposals	Total requested EU contribution of SMEs in retained for funding proposals
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-CYBER-RESILIENCE	8	4,790,724.37 €	2	2,058,150.08 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-SOC	20	16,582,403.32 €	18	10,699,922.10 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-B-03-UPTAKE-CYBERSOLUTIONS	50	24,630,535.52 €	14	7,070,820.28 €
TOTAL	78	46,003,663.21 €	34	19,828,892.46 €

Country participation and share of requested EU contribution

Country Group	Country	N. Participations in evaluated proposals	N. Participations in retained for funding proposals	Requested EU contribution in retained for funding proposals
Associated Countries	Norway	2	1	271,245.00 €
Associated Countries	Total	2	1	271,245.00 €
EU Member States	Austria	3	2	3,505,903.15 €
EU Member States	Belgium	3	2	1,567,817.50 €
EU Member States	Bulgaria	5	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Croatia	4	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Cyprus	7	6	1,927,404.38 €
EU Member States	Czechia	2	2	1,607,161.40 €
EU Member States	Denmark	1	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Estonia	3	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	France	12	6	2,128,396.39 €
EU Member States	Germany	9	5	2,645,309.64 €
EU Member States	Greece	19	15	3,454,762.50 €
EU Member States	Ireland	2	1	1,775,586.36 €
EU Member States	Italy	18	5	2,845,268.83 €
EU Member States	Latvia	5	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Lithuania	4	2	1,118,229.18 €
EU Member States	Luxembourg	4	3	982,688.00 €
EU Member States	Malta	2	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Netherlands	4	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Poland	7	2	4,439,662.40 €
EU Member States	Portugal	5	2	594,088.62 €
EU Member States	Romania	11	8	2,916,793.25 €
EU Member States	Slovakia	7	3	2,271,209.55 €
EU Member States	Slovenia	2	1	111,734.75 €
EU Member States	Spain	17	7	2,602,191.85 €
EU Member States	Sweden	6	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Total	162	72	36,494,207.75 €
GRAND TOTAL		164	73	36,765,452.75 €

C. DIGITAL-ECCC-2022-CYBER-04

Applicants' activity type

Topic	Number of participants from Higher or secondary education in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Higher or secondary education in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Research organisations in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Research organisations in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Private for profit organisations (excl. education) in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Private for profit organisations (excl. education) in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Public body (excl. research and education) in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Public body (excl. research and education) in retained for funding proposals	Number of participants from Other type of organisation in evaluated proposals	Number of participants from Other type of organisation in retained for funding proposals	Total number of participants in evaluated proposals	Total number of participants in retained for funding proposals
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-CIVIL-DEFENCE	15	1	10	1	26	2	6	0	13	6	70	10
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-STANDARDISATION	0	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	4	4	8	7
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST	5	2	1	1	27	19	10	7	6	5	49	34
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	2	1	2	1	36	22	7	7	4	1	51	32
TOTAL	22	4	14	4	92	45	23	14	27	16	178	83

SME participation

Topic	Number of SMEs in evaluated proposals	Total requested EU contribution of SMEs in evaluated proposals	Number of SMEs in retained for funding proposals	Total requested EU contribution of SMEs in retained for funding proposals
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-CIVIL-DEFENCE	20	6,869,825.55 €	3	1,217,312.25 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-STANDARDISATION	3	2,407,619.84 €	2	2,103,204.84 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-EULEGISLATION	24	8,977,084.40 €	14	6,256,395.40 €
DIGITAL-ECCC-2023-DEPLOY-CYBER-04-SUPPORT-ASSIST	23	19,312,569.77 €	17	14,390,493.80 €
TOTAL	70	37,567,099.56 €	36	23,967,406.29 €

Country participation and share of requested EU contribution

Country Group	Country	Number of participations in evaluated proposals	Number of participations in retained for funding proposals	Requested EU contribution in retained for funding proposals
Associated Countries	Norway	3	3	5,818,125.00 €
Associated Countries	Total	3	3	5,818,125.00 €
EU Member States	Austria	1	1	606,208.50 €
EU Member States	Belgium	19	15	9,893,343.55 €
EU Member States	Bulgaria	2	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Croatia	3	1	1,248,155.00 €
EU Member States	Cyprus	8	8	1,533,488.16 €
EU Member States	Czechia	10	3	2,733,151.50 €
EU Member States	Denmark	2	1	621,777.00 €
EU Member States	Estonia	7	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Finland	1	1	133,942.60 €
EU Member States	France	5	2	513,867.50 €
EU Member States	Germany	12	6	9,713,627.99 €
EU Member States	Greece	18	14	2,839,566.00 €
EU Member States	Hungary	5	1	25,091.50 €
EU Member States	Ireland	5	5	1,117,131.90 €
EU Member States	Italy	9	5	6,809,599.84 €
EU Member States	Lithuania	1	1	24,824.00 €
EU Member States	Luxembourg	3	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Netherlands	3	1	251,706.80 €
EU Member States	Poland	9	1	265,274.00 €
EU Member States	Portugal	1	0	0.00 €
EU Member States	Romania	30	3	432,815.00 €
EU Member States	Slovakia	1	1	97,370.00 €
EU Member States	Slovenia	6	4	343,491.40 €
EU Member States	Spain	8	5	790,402.58 €
EU Member States	Sweden	2	1	4,499,134.93 €
EU Member States	Total	171	80	44,493,969.75 €
GRAND TOTAL		174	83	50,312,094.75 €

Annex X. List of Acronyms

ABAC	Accrual-based accounting
AD	Administrator
AST	Assistant
BOA	Back Office Arrangements
CA	Contract agent
CAAR	Consolidated Annual Activity Report
CERT-EU	Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU institutions, bodies and agencies
CRA	Cyber Resilience Act
CSA	Cybersecurity Act
CSIRT	Computer Security Incident Response Team
CTI	Cyber Threat Intelligence
DEP	Digital Europe Programme
DG CONNECT	EC Directorate
DPO	Data Protection Officer
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECCC	European Cybersecurity Competence Centre
ECSO	European Cyber Security Organisation
ED	Executive Director
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
ENISA	European Union Agency for Cybersecurity
EU	European Union
EUAN	EU Agencies Network
EU-LISA	European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GB	Governing Board (of the ECCC)
HEP	Horizon Europe Programme
ICT	Information and communication technology
ISAC	Information Sharing and Analysis Centre
IT	Information technology
JCU	Joint Cyber Unit
JU	Joint Undertaking
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MS	Member State(s)
NCCs	National Coordination Centres
NIS	Networks and information systems
NIS CG	NIS Cooperation Group
NLO	National Liaison Officers
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
SC	Secretary
SLA	Service-level agreement
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPD	Single Programming Document
TA	Temporary agent
TESTA	Trans European Services for Telematics between Administrations
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union