



EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL AND SMES
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EISMEA)

Innovation Ecosystems, SMP/Entrepreneurship and Consumers
SMP/COSME Pillar

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Subject: Preventing cyber-theft of trade secrets: awareness toolkit for SMEs: **Invitation to share your insights and suggestions through interviews, surveys and workshops**

Reference: Service contract EISMEA/2021/OP/0014

The European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), acting under the powers delegated by the European Commission, has contracted **VVA Brussels** in consortium with **Capgemini Nederland B.V.** to execute, with the help of their sub-contractor **Netcompany-Intrasoft S.A.**, the project “Preventing cyber-theft of trade secrets: awareness toolkit for SMEs”.

Competitiveness through innovation is to a large extent dependent on intangible assets such as know-how and trade secrets. These are being targeted by industrial espionage and theft through cyber means by private and state-sponsored actors. This causes loss of competitiveness (loss of contracts, loss of sales) and has negative impact on innovation, with increased cybersecurity costs as well as financial and reputational damages for companies. The negative economic impact of intellectual property (IP) cyber-theft is likely to increase even more with the development of the data economy and the digital transition.

Innovative small and medium-sized companies and start-ups often poorly protect information on ongoing contract negotiations, customer and marketing information, data, new product designs and R&D plans, which all can constitute trade secrets or confidential business information.

To this end, the EISMEA has launched an initiative to set-up awareness raising tools to help EU SMEs and the research community fight cyber theft. For this purpose, as part of this project, a hands-on IP cyber-theft prevention Toolkit will be produced. The contractor will develop and upgrade existing awareness raising tools and define awareness raising campaigns for SMEs and the research community holding trade secrets and confidential business information.

Considering the relevance of the subject for your organisation, EISMEA/European Commission would like to invite you to take part in shaping the cyber theft prevention toolkit. We would be grateful if you could provide your assistance to the contractor by making yourself available for online survey(s), interviews and/or workshops, and by providing data and information that could be useful. We would also highly appreciate it if you could support the contractor with identifying other relevant persons who could be potentially engaged in this study.

A separate privacy statement explains how your personal data, if collected in relation to the above, will be processed and what rights you have as a data subject according to valid data protection legislation.

Should you need any clarification regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact the representative of the contractor: Ms Julia Rzepecka at j.rzepecka@vva.it or EISMEA at EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu

I am pleased to provide the present letter as support in the development of the toolkit.

We thank you in advance for the valuable time you dedicate to supporting our work.

Yours sincerely,

Electronically signed

Natalia Martínez Páramo
Head of Unit