

# **SANReN Cyber Security Challenge 2026 Sponsorship Opportunities**



# Cyber Security Challenge 2026

## Overview

The National Integrated Cyber Infrastructure System (NICIS), which comprises the Centre for High Performance Computing (CHPC), the South African National Research Network (SANReN) and the Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa (DIRISA), will be hosting the CHPC National Conference in November/December 2026. At this conference, SANReN will host the eighth annual Cyber Security Challenge (CSC) competition. The purpose of the competition is to stimulate interest in Cyber Security in general, but more specifically in the field of Network Security within Southern African Tertiary institutions. Therefore, this competition is aimed at university students who are interested in information security fields such as penetration testing, incident response, digital forensics, cryptography, and cybersecurity training.

The annual Cyber Security Challenge competition will consist of:

- A jeopardy-styled Capture the Flag (CTF) event that will test the problem-solving skills of participating teams by requiring them to complete challenges that replicate real-world scenarios. The challenges include binary exploitation, cryptography, web exploitation, reverse engineering, digital forensics, and mobile phone security.
- An attack/defend system for team vs. team battles. Here every team has their own system that consists of dedicated preconfigured hardware and software. In the attack/defence competition, the teams must hack each other but also fix vulnerabilities in their own system (through patching).
- Sponsored challenges that provide students with the opportunity to gain exposure to unique cybersecurity challenges.
- An opportunity to conduct and experience social engineering in a controlled environment.

The key benefit of the CSC is the opportunity for university students to receive exposure to current and trending cybersecurity topics. Such exposure will stimulate interest in the field of cyber and information security, growing the next generation of ethical hackers. Additionally, during the competition, the students may discover new 0-day vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities can then be negated before they can be used by malicious hackers. Finally, the CSC competition offers an opportunity to discover innovative thinkers and identify cybersecurity specialists in the making.

Due to the high interest among students, the CSC competition is divided into two rounds. The qualifier rounds allow students from universities across Southern Africa (including Botswana, Namibia, Eswatini, Malawi and Lesotho) to compete for positions in the final. Upon completion of the qualifier rounds, the top teams will be invited to represent their university in the CSC final at the CHPC National Conference.



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## Capture the Flag

The main event of the CSC competition is a CTF challenge, which is designed to test students' abilities in a wide range of cybersecurity skills. The CTF will be composed of a variety of challenges that include binary exploitation, cryptography, web exploitation, reverse engineering, forensics, and mobile phone security.

## Attack/Defend Challenge

The Attack/Defend challenge presents the students with an alternative twist. Teams are given 2 hours to identify and patch all vulnerabilities on their dedicated server, after which teams must penetrate and change banners on opposing teams' servers to score points.

## Sponsored Challenges

A unique hacking challenge is also presented to test students' skills and abilities.



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## Why Sponsor?

The CHPC National Conference aims to bring together students and professionals in the fields of high-performance computing, big data, and high-speed networking to enable collaboration and communication of work being done. Therefore, the conference provides an excellent opportunity to promote your brand to a wide variety of professionals. Additionally, you will gain direct exposure to students who are interested in cyber and information security during the CSC competition.

For an overview of the 2022 competition, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEZadxBgIPQ>

## 2026 Sponsorship Opportunities

We offer a range of sponsorship opportunities designed to meet your needs and resources.

## Sponsorship Tier Levels

Points accumulated across all challenges forming part of the CSC competition will be aggregated following a weighted approach to determine the podium winners. Prizes are to be awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> placed teams, as well as to the winners of sponsored challenges. Teams can be up to a maximum of 4 members.

	CSC Sponsorship Tier Levels				
	1	2	3	4	5
	<i>Sponsorship of prizes to the value of R 125k or above</i>	<i>Sponsorship of prizes to the value of R 70k or above</i>	<i>Sponsorship of prizes to the value of R 30k or above</i>	<i>Sponsorship of prizes to a value below R30k</i>	<i>Challenge Sponsor Only (no prize support)</i>
<b>PRE-COMPETITION RECOGNITION</b>					
Acknowledgement of the sponsorship on LinkedIn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acknowledgement of the sponsorship on the CSC and CHPC National Conference websites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>ON-SITE RECOGNITION</b>					
Presentation opportunity during the CSC 2026 induction session	✓ 15 minutes	✓ 10 minutes			✓ 8 minutes
Opportunity to engage and interact with the students during the competition	✓	✓			✓
Placement of a pull banner (to be provided) at the conference	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acknowledgement at the CSC 2026 prize-giving ceremony during the CHPC National Conference	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Placement of sponsor logo on the trophy to be received by the winning team and mentor	✓	✓	✓		
Placement of sponsor logo on the medals to be received by the winning team	✓	✓	✓		✓
Placement of sponsor logo on the t-shirt to be given to the students (should circumstances allow)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complimentary tickets to attend the CHPC National Conference	2	1			TBD
<b>POST-COMPETITION RECOGNITION</b>					
Acknowledgement of the sponsorship on LinkedIn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acknowledgement of the sponsorship in news article on SANReN website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Prizes to be considered when determining the appropriate CSC sponsorship tier level include cash or gift cards, bursaries, internships, training vouchers (e.g., Hack the Box or TryHackMe), or electronics.

Other forms of in-kind contributions are also accepted, subject to approval by the CSC organizing committee.

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## Bursary or Internship Sponsorship

We are welcoming and encouraging bursary or internship sponsorships for the top-placed students who participate in the CSC 2026 final, as such contributions will support us in our quest to grow the pool of cybersecurity specialists within South Africa.

## Challenge Sponsorship

Sponsored challenges are also accepted, offering a unique opportunity to test students' skills and abilities. It is important to note that challenge sponsors have insight and input into challenge development. Therefore, a representative would be required to attend and form part of the judging panel for the challenge winner selection. Sponsors will also be required to provide the technical components required to host the challenge.

## Contact

For any queries or questions, please reach out to [heloise@sanren.ac.za](mailto:heloise@sanren.ac.za) or [csc@sanren.ac.za](mailto:csc@sanren.ac.za)