

**General Secretariat for Defence
and National Security (SGDSN)**

Service for Vigilance and Protection against Foreign Digital Interference (VIGINUM)

RULES FOR THE VIGINUM - INRIA PRIZE "FIGHT AGAINST INFORMATION MANIPULATION"

ARTICLE 1 – ORGANISERS

The "VIGINUM-Inria Scientific Prize" is organised by:

The French National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology (Inria), a public-sector scientific and technological institution governed by Articles R326-1 to R326-18 of the Research Code, located at Domaine de Voluceau, BP 105, 78153 Le Chesnay - Rocquencourt Cedex, France (hereinafter "Inria");

the General Secretariat for Defence and National Security (SGDSN), located at 51 boulevard de la Tour-Maubourg, 75700 Paris SP 07, France;

and the Service for Vigilance and Protection against Foreign Digital Interference (VIGINUM), a national service reporting to the General Secretariat for Defence and National Security (SGDSN), located at 51 boulevard de la Tour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris, France.

ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE OF THE PRIZE

The Prize aims to reward scientific papers in the field of digital sciences that have been published or accepted for publication in a scientific journal or in national or international conference proceedings.

The general theme is scientific and technological innovation in the fight against information manipulation (FIM), as well as related tools and methodologies.

The Prize comprises three awards:

- A Judges' Award of €5,000,
- An Innovation Award of €2,000, and
- A Young Researcher Award of €1,000.

Winning papers will be prominently published on the Inria and SGDSN websites, along with the full name of the author(s) and the title and references of the paper, with a link to the online version where applicable.

They will be presented at an awards ceremony, under conditions to be defined jointly by the organisers. A symbolic award in the form of a medal or trophy may also be presented, if the judging panel so decides.

The author(s) of the award-winning papers will be invited to present them at the annual VIGINUM forum.

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The above conditions are not contractual and may change due to factors relating to the Prize organisers and any partners.

ARTICLE 3 – SCHEDULE

The Prize is announced and opens on **15 December, 2025**. Entries are to be submitted exclusively via the *SciencesConf.org* platform, by no later than **midnight on 14 February, 2026**.

The Prize results will be announced no later than the spring of 2026, at the annual VIGINUM forum event.

ARTICLE 4 – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Prize, open to adult scientists, concerns papers published or accepted for publication in the three years preceding the date of submission for consideration for the Prize.

Entry to the Prize competition is free of charge.

To be submitted to the judging panel, papers must meet the following criteria:

- Be written in French or English;
- Describe a research finding, a technical innovation, a didactic presentation of the state of the art, or an initiative to promote interdisciplinary cooperation;
- The paper must be accompanied by a presentation text (in French or English) highlighting in a didactic way the benefits of the research and its current or potential impact on the fight against information manipulation (max. 4,000 characters);
- Authors of submitted papers must be European Union citizens;
- One of the authors of the paper must be affiliated with a public or private laboratory or research team located in the European Union.

A wide range of topics related to information manipulation may be addressed, including but not limited to:

- Data science and artificial intelligence:
 - o Data mining
 - o Machine learning
 - o Big data
 - o Coordinated inauthentic behaviour detection
- Computational social sciences:
 - o Operating principles of (content recommendation) algorithms used by online platforms
 - o Cognitive influencing and manipulation (e.g. bias and framing)
 - o Dissemination of manipulated content and impacts thereof
 - o Construction and manipulation of mental representations
- Signal processing:
 - o Information filtering and extraction
 - o Audio and video compression
 - o De-normalisation and amplification of weak signals
- Computer science (algorithmics):

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- Sorting, search and indexing algorithms
- Structured manipulation of charts and networks
- Compression and format conversion.

ARTICLE 5 – ENTRIES

Entries are individual and are the responsibility of the author(s) of the paper. Jointly authored papers are to be submitted by one of the authors, subject to informing and obtaining permission from the other co-authors. In this specific case, the submitting co-author is responsible for obtaining prior approval from all authors of the paper.

Entries are to be submitted exclusively via the *SciencesConf* platform, between the date of publication of these Prize rules and **midnight on 14 February 2026**.

Submitted entries must include:

- The title of the paper;
- The name(s) of its author(s);
- A CV (stating as a minimum: contact details, training, academic and professional background);
- The postal and email addresses of the author(s);
- A copy of the paper in PDF format;
- A presentation text (in French or English) highlighting in a didactic way the benefits of the research and its current or potential impact on the fight against information manipulation (max. 4,000 characters).
- The date and place of publication, as well as proof of acceptance for publication in the journal or conference where the paper was or will be published (proofreading reports are not required).
- Unreviewed papers will be automatically rejected.

SUBMITTING A PAPER FOR THE PRIZE IMPLIES ACCEPTANCE OF THESE RULES.

An acknowledgement of receipt of each submitted entry will be sent by email.

The organisers reserve the right to request proof of identity from entrants.

The organisers will jointly publicise and disseminate the Prize rules, schedule and results, as well as the date and location of the award ceremony, including via their respective websites.

ARTICLE 6 – ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Research papers submitted by entrants will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Scientific contribution to FIM;
- Originality of the topic addressed;
- Quality of the proof;
- Research methodology and structure;
- Legibility of the research;
- Inclusion in the state of the art;

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- Reproducibility of the research;
- Criticisms and limitations of the presented method;
- Qualitative analysis and scope of findings.

ARTICLE 7 – JUDGING PANELS

Two separate judging panels have been set up to select submitted papers and reward their authors:

- A **selection panel**, tasked with producing a short-list of papers, considering the Prize eligibility criteria and the completeness of the submitted entries;
- An **award panel** that chooses the three winning entries, based on the Prize assessment criteria.

A conflict of interest may arise if a member of the judging panel has shared an affiliation (i.e. hailed from the same research team or laboratory) or has co-authored a paper with one of the authors of a submitted paper within the last 5 years. Panel members will have no access to information relating to papers for which they are subject to a conflict of interest.

The judging panels operate independently. No claims will be accepted.

The selection panel for the Prize is made up of an equal number of VIGINUM members and Inria members. Panel members are appointed before the submission period commences. This list is not made public.

The Prize award panel has six members:

- One member representing the VIGINUM Ethics and Scientific Committee;
- One member representing the VIGINUM management team;
- Two members representing Inria;
- Two qualified independent figures identified by the Prize organising committee.

A list with the names of the award panel members is publicly available on the SGDSN and Inria websites.

Following the award deliberations, a report governed by these rules is issued, notifying the Prizes awarded, including the name and amount of each Prize as well as the name of the winner(s). This report is signed by the chairman of the award panel.

ARTICLE 8 - DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The purpose of the personal information communicated to the Prize organisers by entrants is to allow their entries to be processed in accordance with these rules. As required by the General Data Protection Regulation and the French Data Protection Act of 6 January 1978 (amended), entrants have rights of access, opposition, rectification and deletion for all data concerning them. You may send an email to dpo@inria.fr if you wish to request information or exercise your data protection and freedom of information rights as they relate to the processing of personal data arising from the organisation of the Prize.

ARTICLE 9 – LIABILITY

The liability of the organisers is strictly limited to remittance of the award effectively and validly won.

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It is expressly stated that the Internet is not a secure network. Consequently, the organisers decline all liability for any contamination by viruses or third-party hacking of terminals used by Prize entrants, and for the consequences of their connection to the network via the website and on the pages where the rules are accessible.

The organisers decline all liability in the event that disruption to the Internet, telephone lines or receiving equipment prevents the Prize from being awarded normally.

Similarly, the organisers decline all liability in the event that one or more entrants are unable to connect to or use the web page on which the rules are accessible, due to network congestion or any other technical anomaly or problem.

The organisers may cancel or postpone part or all of the Prize for any valid reason, particularly if it appears that any form of fraud has been committed, in particular by electronic means, in the context of participation in the Prize or determination of the winner(s). In such an event, they reserve the right not to present awards to fraudsters and/or to prosecute the perpetrators of said frauds before the competent courts.

The rules governing the Prize will be available to consult at any time throughout the process, on the SGDSN and Inria websites, other than in cases of *force majeure* or unavailability of said sites. Note that the organisers may interrupt access to the website and the Prize at any time, in particular for technical, updating or maintenance reasons. Under no circumstances may the organisers be held liable for such interruptions and their consequences, and in particular for the fact that a candidate might not have the most recent version of the Prize rules or other related document following a change to said documents.

The organisers reserve the right to cancel, postpone, extend, shorten or modify any or all aspects of the organisation of the Prize, particularly in the event of *force majeure* or an insufficient number of entries. They may not be held liable in this respect.

ARTICLE 10 - CHANGES TO THE RULES

Any changes to the Prize rules will be announced on the SGDSN and Inria websites, subject to Article 9 above.

ARTICLE 11 - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GUARANTEES

Entrants warrant that they are the authors of all content that they submit for the Prize, and that they hold all necessary rights and permissions enabling them to commit to these rules.

For the purposes of the Prize selection process, entrants authorise the organisers to reproduce, present or disseminate, in its entirety and at no charge, the paper submitted for the Prize in the media sent to the judging panel.

With regard to the winning papers, entrants authorise the organisers in advance to reproduce, represent, translate into any language, and disseminate the title of the submitted paper and a link to the online version thereof (where applicable), as well as the paper in its entirety, at no charge, subject to the rights

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of the publishers, on any medium and in particular:

- The websites of the organisers;
- Publications by the organisers relevant to the Prize and/or its themes;
- Social networks and similar media, for the purpose of communication relating to the Prize and/or its themes.

This permission is granted for the entire world and for the legal duration of copyright, for use within the scope of the mission of the organisers, on an exclusively non-commercial basis and subject to citing the name of the author and the references of the paper.

Entrants certify that content submitted for the Prize respects the rights of third parties, and in particular their proprietary and moral rights (to images, texts, logos, etc.), trademark rights and personality rights such as name and image rights. In particular, entrants warrant that they have not reproduced without permission any text authored by third parties. Entrants guarantee to the organisers that the use of papers presented for the Prize and the related presentation will not infringe the rights of third parties, and accept personal responsibility for handling any claims and/or procedures, whatever their form, purpose and nature, that may be brought against the organisers and relate directly or indirectly to the creation and/or use of content that they have presented. Entrants guarantee to indemnify the organisers against any damages and costs arising from disputes with third parties in this respect.

ARTICLE 12 - APPLICABLE LAW AND JURISDICTION

These rules, and, more generally, the Prize, are subject solely to French law. In the event of persistent disagreement regarding the application or interpretation of these rules, and in the absence of an amicable agreement, disputes shall be referred to the competent courts.

ARTICLE 13 – CONTACT DETAILS AND INFORMATION

For more information, feel free to write to defence.securite@inria.fr or refer to the SGDSN website.