



SCIENTIFIC GRAND PRIZE 2026

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Foundation Charles Defforey-Institut de France will grant a prize entitled « Fondation Charles Defforey-Institut de France 2026 Scientific Grand Prize », which will be awarded to a research project focused on the following theme :

The challenges of scientific instrumentation

Science cannot progress without scientific instrumentation, and it is through constant dialogue between scientific questions and technological advances that knowledge progresses. Today's scientific instruments are complex assemblies of precision mechanics, electronics, optics, and computer science, yet reducing their size while maintaining reliability and robustness remains an ongoing challenge. Conversely, technological advances also make it possible to design very large instruments with greater sensitivity.

These new instruments open up immense possibilities, enabling ever more accurate measurements, whether in situ, in real time, or distributed.

A fundamental paradox of scientific measurement is that the act of observing can alter the system being observed. This intrusion, which is particularly critical in the quantum domain, requires minimizing this disturbance or adapting the measurement strategy.

A scientific result is only valid if it is reproducible. The traceability of measurements represents an ongoing logistical challenge. With the increasing digitization of instruments, the volume of data generated is becoming colossal. Beyond signal acquisition, the challenge then shifts to processing, storage, and interpretation. Analysis algorithms and machine learning are now becoming essential components of instrumentation, but they introduce their own biases and uncertainties that must be evaluated.

The Fondation Charles Defforey-Institut de France Scientific Grand Prize is opened to **international candidates**. It will provide a financial contribution to a high-level research project conducted in a French or foreign laboratory placed under the authority of a French or foreign scientist.

The Prize is worth **400 000 euros**, 90% of which will contribute to research and 10% will be granted to the scientific supervisor of the team or to the laboratory in recognition of their contribution to the award-winning research. However, it will not be the case if it is an institution.

The research funding provided by the Prize may be used for operating or equipment expenses, as well as for scientific missions or publications and secretarial expenses, but may not under any circumstances be used for salary expenses.

A jury chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the first Division of the Academy of Sciences will select the candidates and propose, in a defined order of ranking, two applications to the Foundation's Board of Directors, which will make the final choice.

The winner of the Prize must be present or represented at the formal ceremony for the presentation of the Grand Prix des Fondations de l'Institut de France, which will be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 3 p.m. under the dome of the Institut (23 quai de Conti – 75006 Paris).

Applications must include:

1. the application form (downloadable from the Institut de France website) (www.institut-de-france.fr)
2. a one- to two-page executive summary (title of the research project, some details from the team leader's CV, a summary of the work accomplished and the research project)
3. a list of the main publications (maximum 10): a maximum of 3 to 5 lines justifying the choice of each publication, as well as the corresponding links to the journals or open archives, if they exist
4. the CV of the team leader (maximum 2 pages)
5. Names of team members, their titles and positions
6. A description (3-4 pages) of work already completed by the candidate and/or their team
7. A short description (maximum 3 pages) of work in progress

Applications must be written in French or English so that foreign experts can be consulted if necessary.

Applications must be sent by email in a single file (.pdf format) to **prix@institutdefrance.fr**. This electronic submission must be accompanied by a postal copy (one copy) sent to:
Fondation Charles Defforey-Institut de France 23 quai de Conti
75006 Paris - France -

They must be sent by email to prix@institutdefrance.fr no later than February 28, 2026

Applications should be sent no later than February 28, 2026 via e-mail at prix@institutdefrance.fr as well as by regular mail at the following address:

**Fondation Charles Defforey-Institut de France
23 quai de Conti
75006 Paris - France -**