



In partnership with :



Le Mans Sonore International Competition - Rules for the 2026 Sound Design Awards - "Enhancing use through sound"

Context

Le Mans Sonore, the fourth edition of the International Sound Biennial, will take place in Le Mans **from 17 to 25 January 2026** throughout the city. The aim of the event is to raise the profile of excellence in acoustics and sound design, turning it into a cultural event for the general public to promote the region.

As in the last edition, the international Le Mans Sonore competition will support creation and research. It will reward the year's best international projects in the field of sound design.

Categories and expected projects

Candidates can compete in one of the following **3 categories**:

1. **Objects, Services and Society**
2. **Interactive device (new category)**
3. **Radio France**



The projects submitted must use a sound design approach (design for a use and a user) and must not have been in existence for more than 4 years (in relation to the date they were put on the market, if this is the case). They can be an existing project (industrialised, in service), a research and/or prospective project (laboratory, company, etc.), a prototype in the process of being marketed (PoC) or finalised.

For the Radio France prize, precise specifications must be met.

1. Objects, services and Society prize

This category covers sound creations integrated into industrial objects or services, whether digital or physical: transport, connected objects, household appliances, robotics, packaging, etc.

Uses may include :

- **Sound interfaces** : sound dimension of user interfaces (HMI).
- **Voice assistants** : voice design, interactions with AI, voice expressivity.
- **Security and privacy** : embedded sound in sensitive systems (e.g. cars, home automation, robotics)
- **Scientific or technological projects are also accepted**, provided they have reached the functional prototype stage (new sound materials, innovative audio broadcasting devices...).

The uses may or may not be particularly linked to societal issues, in which case priority will be given to social links and culture.

These projects may focus in particular on:

- Sound signage in public places (transport, buildings, urban spaces)
- Health and well-being: sound therapy, soothing atmospheres, hospital sound environments, etc.
- Accessibility and inclusion: sound devices designed for people with disabilities
- Social and cultural contribution: projects in museums, shopping centres, stations, territories...

Documentation

Deliverables must be accompanied by visual documentation describing the approach and concept, structure and production of the sounds (PDF, video, audio, computer graphics or other).

If a video is supplied (film, animated gif, slideshow), it must not exceed 3 minutes in length (hosted on Youtube, Vimeo, etc. in private access).

2. Interactive Device Prize

This area explores devices that combine sound, space and audience participation.

Sound becomes a dynamic actor that reacts to the gestures, movements and actions of visitors.

Examples of possible applications:

- **Immersive exhibitions**: sound evolving according to the movement or interactions of the public (e.g. movement sensors, manipulable objects).
- **Urban installations**: devices in the public space where passers-by trigger or modify sounds (e.g. sound floors, interactive walls).
- **Video games and virtual reality (VR)**: adaptive sound worlds, reactive 3D sound, player's voice modifying the environment, etc.

The proposed interactive sound device must transform the space into a dynamic and participatory experience.

Through an avant-garde use of related technologies (including audio spatialisation, sensors, software and interactive programming environments, etc.) these sound creations propose new forms of narrative and sensoriality.

Documentation

Deliverables must be accompanied by visual documentation describing the approach and concept, structure and production of the sounds (PDF, video, audio, computer graphics or other).

If a video is supplied (film, animated gif, slideshow), it must not exceed 3 minutes in length (hosted on Youtube, Vimeo, etc. in private access).



3. Radio France Prize

Candidates for the Radio France 2026 Sound Design Prize must comply with the following specifications when producing their proposal.

If the winner's proposal is selected for actual use on mobile and on-air, the product will be the subject of a contract with Radio France.

Title :

Sound Identity 'Alerte application ICI'.

Deliverables (2) :

- 1 x Sonal.
- 1 x Musical Carpet featuring Sonal.

Functions :

- Sonal: To signal the arrival/notification of any type of information (news, service, leisure, sport, music, etc.) on the 'ICI' mobile application.
- Sonal and Tapis Musical: To illustrate on-air marketing dedicated to the 'ICI' app.

Broadcasting contexts :

- Sonal: 'ICI' application (all mobiles)
<https://www.francebleu.fr/application-mobile>
- Sonal and Tapis musical: 'ICI' antenna (all broadcast modes)
<https://www.francebleu.fr/>

Aesthetics :

- All sound sources (sound effects, instruments, etc.) and techniques (sampling, synthesis, processing) are possible.
- No voice (spoken or sung).
- Key: B flat minor.

Key words :

Bright, Credible, Welcoming, Dynamic, Service.

Duration :

- Sonal: Minimum 01 seconds, maximum 02 seconds, excluding reverb.

Tapis Musical : 01 minute, excluding reverberation

Conditions :

- Original and exclusive creations, never before used/presented outside this competition.
- Only 1 proposal per deliverable.
- Format: 24-bit 48kHz stereo .wav file.

- The winning entry must then be delivered in multitrack format, to be mixed in the Radio France studios.

Documentation :

Deliverables must be accompanied by documentation describing the approach and concept, structure and production of the sounds (PDF, video, audio, computer graphics or other).

Reward :

The winner of the Radio France Prize will receive :

- A broadcast on one of Radio France's channels,
- A day's visit to Radio France's sound design and audio innovation activities at the Maison de la Radio et de la Musique (Paris).
- A sound mixing session in one of the Maison de la Radio et de la Musique studios, during the day-long visit.

Should the winner's proposal be selected for actual use on mobile and on-air, the product will be the subject of a contract with Radio France Editions.

Applications

Application criteria :

Applications may be submitted by a single person or by a multidisciplinary team, provided the project concerns only applied sound design.

The applicant may be a sound designer, musician, researcher, sound engineer, recent school graduate, etc. working as a freelancer, in a design agency, in a company (startup, SME, group) or in a local authority, public service, association, etc.

Where applicable, the applicant must obtain the agreement of his partners or brands, such as his customer, for an existing project.

In the case of a group application, one person will be designated as the team representative (project and application sponsor).

Content of the expected application :

Candidates must complete [the application form](#) available on the Le Mans Sonore website, giving their contact details and the main details of their project. Deliverables must be accompanied by visual documentation describing the approach and concept, structure and production of the sounds (PDF, video, audio, computer graphics or other).

If a video is supplied (film, animated gif, animated slideshow), it must not exceed 3 minutes in length, (hosted on Youtube, Vimeo, ... in PRIVATE access) and must also be sent when submitting the application by filling in the link in the form.

Selection criteria and process

Projects will be judged on the basis of the excellence of their prospective analyses and their responses to usage, with particular emphasis on the creative, innovative, functional, useful and aesthetic aspects... with the sound ambition of serving the function.

The general criteria selected by the jury will be as follows:

- Intelligent sound solutions and concepts
- Innovative and useful aspect,
- Accessibility for all
- Consideration of sound as a use value

All candidates will receive a reasoned assessment from the jury. The winners will be expected at the awards ceremony in **January 2026** to be presented with the trophy for their category and to briefly present their achievements.

The selection process is as follows:

- **Application deadline: Monday, January 5, 2026 at 12 noon.**
- Qualification of projects, jury and communication to winners of results: **Mid-January 2026**
- Presentation of winners and prize-giving ceremony in Le Mans: **January 23, 2026 at 5 p.m.**

Jury

The jury will be made up of experts who will evaluate all submissions. It will award prizes to the best projects. As the jury is sovereign, the choice of winners cannot be contested in any way whatsoever. The composition of the jury will be announced on the Le Mans Sonore website.

Awards

1. Objects, Services and Society

Trophy specially designed for this edition.

A prize worth €500.

2. Interactive device (new category)

Trophy specially designed for the event.

A prize worth 500€.

3. Radio France

Trophy specially designed for the event.

The winner of the Prix Radio France will receive :

- A broadcast on one of Radio France's channels,
- A day of visits and meetings with Radio France's sound design and audio innovation activities at the Maison de la Radio (Paris).
- A sound mixing session in one of the Maison de la Radio studios, during the day-long visit.



Should the winner's proposal be selected for actual use on mobile and on-air, the product will be the subject of a contract with RF Editions.

General terms and conditions of the competition

All authors, whether individuals or companies, involved in the project are subject to copyright and are eligible to enter. Candidates may apply individually or as a team.

The award will be presented and received in person at a ceremony on the **23 of January 2026**, during the Le Mans Sonore biennial.

Please ensure that all information (e.g. project and company name) is correct for communication purposes.

Participants agree to abide by the competition rules.

It is understood that participants accept all terms and conditions stated once the submission has been made.

Entrants confirm that they have obtained the legal authority to enter the competition under the terms and conditions set out above.

The competition rules are governed by and interpreted in accordance with French law and are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the French courts.

Participants guarantee that they have obtained the agreement of the respective rights holders, in the event that the work submitted contains elements belonging to other parties, for Le Mans Sonore to use these components within the framework of possible publication and communication forms.

Participants grant Le Mans Sonore a right of use, to publish, provide public access on the Internet and make use, tangible or intangible, of the submitted material in print and other digital media.

Do you have any questions ? You can contact us at the following e-mail address: **concours.lms@lemans.fr**