

Proofpoint Innovation Awards 2026, EMEA — Judging Criteria

How nominations are evaluated

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All nominations are assessed by an independent judging panel across five criteria: Business Impact (30%), Innovation and Creativity (25%), Deployment Excellence (20%), Scope and Scale (15%), and Industry and Wider Impact (10%). The criteria below show what strong nominations look like for each award category.

Cyber Visionary of the Year *(Individual Award)*

Recognises a senior leader shaping strategic direction and driving measurable transformation.

What judges look for:

- Clear strategic vision with measurable impact on the organisation's security posture
- Stakeholder engagement at board and executive level
- Cultural change driven by the individual's leadership
- Demonstrable improvements in security outcomes attributable to their direction

Cyber Defender of the Year *(Individual Award)*

Celebrates a hands-on security practitioner who has made an outsized impact through operational excellence and deep platform expertise.

What judges look for:

- Hands-on platform expertise and configuration depth
- Measurable security outcomes driven directly by the individual's work
- Operational complexity managed and resolved
- Evidence of platform adoption, improvement, and innovation in day-to-day practice

Security Culture Champion *(Individual Award)*

Recognises an individual who has driven meaningful security behaviour change across their organisation.

What judges look for:

- Behaviour change programmes with quantifiable results
- Creative and human-centred approaches to security awareness
- Executive and cross-functional engagement
- Evidence of lasting cultural change, not just one-off campaigns

Security Transformation of the Year *(Company / Team Award)*

For the team that delivered the most impressive security change programme.

What judges look for:

- Scale, speed, and complexity of the transformation delivered
- Cross-functional execution and effective change management
- Measurable security outcomes following the transformation
- Stakeholder alignment and board-level engagement throughout

Platform Excellence Award *(Company / Team Award)*

For the organisation that has achieved exceptional depth and breadth in their security platform deployment.

What judges look for:

- Multi-product adoption with high user coverage across the organisation
- Full platform operationalisation and measurable security outcomes
- Evidence of innovation in deployment, including early adoption of new capabilities
- Integration between security tools delivering compounded value

AI Innovation Award *(Company / Individual Award)*

For pioneers breaking new ground through AI, automation, or creative approaches to security.

What judges look for:

- Bold use of AI or automation that delivers measurable security impact
- Creative thinking that goes beyond standard deployment or configuration
- Clear evidence of improved security posture or operational efficiency
- Applicability to the wider security community — others can learn from this

Nominations are scored independently by each judge on a 1–5 scale per criterion, weighted as shown. Final winners are determined by the panel calibration call in September 2026. All valid nominations appear in the Innovation Gallery regardless of outcome.
