

WINNERS OF THE 2026 ROLEX AWARDS

PROTECTING THE WORLD FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

August 2026

[The five winners of the 2026 Rolex Awards have been announced.](#) Hailing from Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru, China and the United States, the 2026 Laureates are five women who represent a truly international effort to protect our world for generations to come.



As part of the Perpetual Planet Initiative, the Rolex Awards support exceptional individuals with innovative projects in areas as diverse as creating technologies that improve lives, saving endangered ecosystems, protecting the oceans, exploring new frontiers on the planet, or pioneering advances in science and health. 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the Awards, which have embodied the company's determination to contribute to the wider world that inspires the Perpetual Planet Initiative. Since their foundation in 1976 the Rolex Awards have supported 165 Laureates, whose projects have had a profound impact across some 67 countries.

The tangible benefits of the Laureates' projects are directly related to the environment, with more than 50 million trees planted; 137 endangered species and 32 major ecosystems protected, including 57,600 square kilometres of Amazon rainforest; hundreds of new species discovered; 25 challenging expeditions completed; and 50 innovative technologies developed for a range of applications. Millions of people across the world have benefitted from the Laureates' award-winning projects over the past 50 years. Rolex supports the work of its Laureates on the long term and stands by their side long after they receive their Award, by providing them help, guidance and access to the Perpetual Planet Initiative's extensive network of experts in their respective fields.

The Rolex Awards are managed at the company's headquarters in Geneva. The applications, which can be submitted in English, Spanish or Chinese, are selected by Rolex and assessed with the help of experts in relevant fields.

[The winners of the 2026 Edition are the following five managers of innovative and inspiring projects:](#)

Rachel Ikemeh. Nigeria. Mobilizing community-led conservation in Nigeria. Credited with bringing the Niger Delta red colobus monkey back from the brink of extinction, Rachel Ikemeh inspires community-led conservation. Her innovative approach involves and equips communities in the Delta – a little-studied biodiversity hotspot and the heart of Nigeria's oil industry – and has successfully allowed her to protect over 5,839 hectares of forest and at least 13 threatened species, while improving the livelihoods of more than 2,500 people. The Rolex Award will support her in building a new training hub and mobile education programme in the Delta, helping to recreate her success throughout neighbouring communities.



Rosa Vásquez Espinoza. Peru. Saving bees to protect the Amazon. Chemical biologist Rosa Vásquez Espinoza was the first to scientifically link deforestation in the Amazon with the decline of stingless bees – a critical pollinator of endemic plant species, benefitting livelihoods by securing food production. Her research significantly contributed to a landmark case in Peru, which resulted not only in the legal protection of the stingless bees, but in the recognition of their legal rights. The Rolex Award will allow her to expand an indigenous-led corridor of protected stingless bee habitats in the Peruvian Amazon.



Binbin Li. China.

Protecting wild pandas. There are fewer than 2,000 giant pandas living in the wild, and they favour the mountainous, bamboo-rich forests of central China, but so do free-ranging livestock. Conservation scientist Binbin Li is working with local communities to create a sustainable approach to livestock grazing benefitting their economies, whilst also protecting the area's wildlife. The Rolex Award will help Li implement and scale up solutions across several mountain ranges throughout China.

Pardis Sabeti. West Africa. Preventing epidemics.

Medical geneticist Pardis Sabeti has been at the frontline of fighting virus outbreaks and potential pandemics in West Africa for decades. She is applying pioneering technologies and algorithms to the detection and containment of infectious diseases, and her skills are instrumental in training local partners in the countries closest to potential outbreaks.

Farwiza Farhan. Indonesia. Defending a forest in Sumatra.

The Leuser Ecosystem of Sumatra, Indonesia, is the last place on earth where elephants, tigers, orangutans and rhinoceros still coexist in the wild – but it is under persistent pressure from development and deforestation. Forest conservationist Farwiza Farhan has successfully mobilized local communities and led numerous campaigns against the destruction of the ecosystem.

For nearly a century, Rolex has supported pioneering explorers to help them achieve countless historic feats. Over time, the company has moved from championing exploration for the sake of discovery to protecting the planet. Through the Perpetual Planet Initiative, Rolex stands alongside those building a better future for all life on earth.

The Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative was launched in 2019 and now has a portfolio of more than 30 partners and 165 Laureates of the Rolex Awards, active in three main focus areas: Oceans; Landscapes; and Science, Health and Technology. For the Oceans, Rolex supports a wide range of projects such as Mission Blue and Coral Gardeners as well as Testimonees, including Sylvia Earle, Cristina Mittermeier and Paul Nicklen.

[All the projects winning the Rolex Awards since 1976](#) in the areas of science and health, environment, applied technology, exploration and cultural heritage are presented on the website allowing to know more and inspire other actors to implement innovative practices.

To know more

[2026 Laureates announced in the Rolex website](#)

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