

SUSTAINABILITY

Rolex Awards welcomes 50th laureate class

February 27, 2026



The program has supported 165 Laureates from 67 countries since its inception. Image credit: Rolex

By ZACH JAMES FOR LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Swiss watchmaker **Rolex** is reshaping a long-running initiative.

The Rolex Award for Enterprise, now named the Rolex Awards, is shifting from a biannual to an annual schedule in honor of its 50th anniversary. The latest class of five new Laureates, all of whom are women, represent Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru, China and the United States.

Making an impact

Part of the Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative, the Rolex Awards arrive with a renewed focus on innovation within the fields of environmental conservation, science, health and technology, according to the brand's Feb. 23 announcement.

Together, the 2026 honorees have planted more than 50 million trees, protected 32 major ecosystems, safeguarded 137 endangered species, discovered hundreds of new species and developed innovative technologies through their respective projects.

The class includes Chinese environmental scientist Binbin Li, Indonesian forest conservationist Farwiza Farhan, Iranian-American medical geneticist Pardis Sabeti, Nigerian conservationist Rachel Ikemeh and Peruvian chemical biologist Rosa Vsquez Espinoza.

Respectively, the professionals' work centers on protecting wild pandas, defending Sumatran forests, preventing viral outbreaks in West Africa, leading community-based ecological recovery in Nigeria and saving bees to preserve the Amazon rainforest.



Recipients of the award are chosen by leading scientific experts, who assess if the project is original, beneficial and effective. Image credit: Rolex

Throughout the rest of the year, Rolex will uplift the stories of the 2026 class through digital content.

Italy's Prada Group is similarly refreshing an ecologically focused initiative, with ocean literacy advocacy platform Sea Beyond's programming receiving updates beginning this month ([see story](#)).

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