



ENI AWARD 2014

Rome, 17 June 2014 – The award ceremony for the Eni Award 2014 edition was held today at the Quirinale and attended by the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, the Chairman of Eni, Emma Marcegaglia and the CEO of Eni, Claudio Descalzi. Over the years the award, first introduced in 2007 for research in the fields of energy and environmental technology, has become internationally recognized. The Eni Award is aimed at promoting more efficient and sustainable energy sources, as well as inspiring new generations of researchers. The award is a demonstration of the importance that Eni gives to scientific research and sustainability.

The Scientific Award Committee has 23 members this year, including Nobel Prize Sir Harold Kroto as well as university deans, researchers and scientists from the most prestigious universities and research centres in the world and is chaired by French academic Gérard Férey. At the same time, the Eni Innovation Recognition prize was assigned to three internal research teams for achieving particularly relevant results in innovation for the company's business.

Over the years, thousands of researchers from around the world have submitted their work to the Eni Award and even more have the highly qualified personalities been involved in the Scientific Committee, which includes 25 Nobel Prizes. For the edition 2014, applications were over 1400.

The prize "New Frontiers of Hydrocarbons" (Upstream) has been awarded to **Tapan Mukerji, Gary Mavko and Jack Dvorkin**, Stanford University, and to **Dario Grana**, University of Wyoming, for designing and developing an innovative method to get quantitative information from the subsurface from seismic data. Seismic surveying techniques already play a fundamental role in the research and production of oil and

gas, as they enable scientists to "see" the subsurface. The team, led by Professor Mukerji, has identified correlations between the physical properties of rocks and fluids and experimental data, also developing an innovative interpretative model for quantifying meaningful parameters.

The prize "New Frontiers of Hydrocarbons" (Downstream) goes to **Amir H. Hoveyda**, Boston College (Massachusetts-USA), for planning and developing catalysts for synthesising complex molecules with specific steric properties, i.e. with a particular spatial arrangement of their main-chain atoms. In particular, Prof. Hoveyda has identified new and particularly efficient synthesis methods that use innovative, low cost catalysts to produce high purity compounds used in pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals and agrochemicals. Prof. Hoveyda's research focuses therefore on important chemical transformations and also extends to the field of advanced materials and polymers.

The "Renewable Energy" prize is awarded to **Jay D. Keasling**, University of California, Berkeley, (USA), for his research aimed at engineering micro-organisms, in particular *Escherichia coli* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. These can be used for the production of bio-fuels, whose properties are very similar to petroleum-based fuels, but their combustion does not release additional quantities of CO₂ in the atmosphere as they are synthesized from sugars derived from biomass. Compared to the technologies currently being adopted, based on a cocktail of enzymes, the use of specially engineered microorganisms significantly reduces the cost of transforming cellulose into glucose for the production of bio-fuels.

Clément Sanchez, Collège de France in Paris, has been awarded the "Protection of the Environment" prize. Dr. Sanchez is a pioneer in the development of highly innovative technologies for the design, synthesis and processing of multifunctional inorganic and hybrid organic-inorganic materials, which have important applications in the energy, energy saving, environmental and medical fields.

The two "Debut in Research" prizes, reserved for researchers under the age of 30 with

a PhD from an Italian University, go to **Martina Siena** and **Nicola Bortolamei**.

The thesis of **Martina Siena** analyses the numerical simulation of fluid flow in oil and gas deposits, which is extremely important to predict the productive behaviour of oil and natural gas deposits. Martina's research proposes an original approach to define the distribution of observable characteristics of porous media, explaining effectively the physical parameters that control flow and transport in oil formations. Her theory has been experimentally confirmed.

Nicola Bortolamei has written an excellent thesis on the electrochemical methods for the production of special polymeric materials, including biological systems. The results of these studies have been published in prestigious international scientific journals.

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