



Eni Award 2026: outstanding achievements in energy and environmental research honoured today in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic

The “Eni Joule for Entrepreneurship” Special Mention was also awarded to teams with the most innovative and sustainable business ideas.

Rome, 29 October 2026 – The Eni Award ceremony was held today at the Quirinal Palace in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic, **Sergio Mattarella**, Eni's Chairwoman of the Board of Directors, **Giuseppina Di Foggia**, and Eni's Chief Executive Officer, **Claudio Descalzi**.

Now in its eighteenth edition, the Eni Award is internationally recognised in the research community for its focus on energy and environment, two areas in which greater collaboration across the scientific community is becoming increasingly important. The award reflects the value Eni places on research and technological innovation, as well as the company's commitment to promoting sustainability and access to energy, in line with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since the Eni Award was established in 2008, its Scientific Committee, which evaluates the research projects submitted, has included scientists from some of the world's leading research institutions, including six Nobel Prize laureates.

The **Energy Transition Award**, one of the three main prizes, recognises outstanding innovations aimed at decarbonising the current energy system. This year's award was won by Professor **Véronique Gouverneur** of the **University of Oxford (United Kingdom)**. Her pioneering work has opened up new opportunities in fluorine chemistry through the development of safer and more sustainable processes for producing compounds widely used in batteries, as well as in pharmaceuticals and agricultural products. These technologies eliminate the need to produce hydrofluoric acid, a highly hazardous substance, while reducing energy consumption and environmental impact. Gouverneur has also demonstrated the potential to recover fluorine from industrial waste, supporting a more circular approach to resource use.

The **Energy Frontiers Award**, which recognises research with the potential to transform the future energy landscape, was awarded to Professor **Laura Gagliardi** of the **University of Chicago (United States)**. Her research has led to the development of advanced mathematical models based on quantum mechanics that can predict the properties of materials before they are synthesized in the laboratory, helping to accelerate experimentation. Her work focuses on designing innovative materials for energy and environmental applications, including porous frameworks that act as molecular sponges, capable of capturing carbon dioxide directly from the air and harvesting water from atmospheric humidity. Her research also contributes to improving the efficiency of catalytic processes, creating new opportunities for the development of more sustainable energy technologies.

The **Advanced Environmental Solutions Award**, dedicated to research aimed at protecting and sustainably using natural resources, was awarded to **John F. Hartwig** of the **University of California, Berkeley (United States)**. His groundbreaking contribution to plastics recycling is based on the development of a scalable and sustainable catalytic process that breaks down polyethylene and polypropylene, two of the world's most widely used plastics, into their fundamental building blocks, which can be reused to produce new materials without any loss of quality. This innovation supports circular plastics recycling, reducing waste, consumption of fossil-based raw materials and emissions, while contributing to environmental protection.

The **Young Researcher of the Year Award** is dedicated to researchers who have earned their PhDs at Italian universities. This year's two awards went to **Leonardo Magherini** and **Filippo Trevisi**.

Leonardo Magherini, from the Politecnico di Torino, examined the transport mechanisms of different types of waterborne particles in his doctoral thesis. These particles can play a dual role: they may pose potential environmental risks or serve as effective tools for remediation. Filippo Trevisi, from the Politecnico di Milano, explored a new class of wind energy technology known as windplanes: fixed-wing aircraft, tethered to the ground, that fly at high speed along circular trajectories at high altitude. These systems can also be deployed in locations where conventional wind turbines cannot be installed.

The **Young Talents from Africa** category, established in 2017 to mark the tenth anniversary of Eni Award and is dedicated to young researchers from the African continent. Two awards were presented this year, to **Nosakhare Jeremiah Aigbedion** of the Pan African University Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (Kenya) and **Gosego Keotshepile Mapula Sedikelo** of the University of South Africa (South Africa). The winning PhD students receive an award to support and enhance their research activities during their doctoral studies at their respective universities.

Nosakhare Jeremiah Aigbedion's research aims to develop new, stronger and more durable metal alloys to improve energy storage in concentrated solar power plants, enabling electricity generation even after sunset and supporting a more stable and sustainable energy supply in Africa.

Sedikelo's research focuses on an innovative and sustainable method that uses ultrasound to recover valuable metals, including lithium, nickel and cobalt, from spent batteries. The recovered materials can be reused in the production of new batteries, reducing environmental impact.

In the **Eni for Innovation** category, which recognises the most innovative projects developed by Eni researchers and technical experts, the following teams received awards:

- **Mario Baldassarre, Mauro Burattini, Rosa Carbone, Davide Chianetta and Davide Deriu (Eni)**, for developing an innovative process to valorise food waste, maximising the yield in energy products (Technological Solution category).
- **Fabio Assandri, Francesco Bonacini, Angelo Ferrando, Ilic Formigoni, Marzia La Barbera, Mirco Nodari and Nicola Vecchini (Versalis)**, for developing an advanced pyrolysis technology for recycling mixed plastic waste with highly variable compositions (Technological Solution category).
- **Francesco Cannarile, Aurora Cerabolini, Roberto Grandi, Lorenzo Lancia, Debora Parisi and Gianmaria Tarantino (Eni)**, for developing a methodology to efficiently adapt Large Language Models (LLMs) to specific business domains (Digital Solution category).

This year, Eni, through **Joule**, its school for entrepreneurship, also presented the **Eni Joule for Entrepreneurship Special Mention**, recognising teams, university spin-offs and startups, with the aim of supporting the application, development and transfer of technologies to foster the development of a sustainable innovation ecosystem.

Three startups were recognised:

- **Alkelux** produces an environmentally sustainable nanopolymer used as an additive in food packaging. By valorising agricultural processing waste, the technology helps make the supply chain more sustainable.
- **Hypermeteo** collects, processes and distributes certified, high-resolution weather and climate data and indices, combining global observational data with artificial intelligence and proprietary algorithms to turn meteorological information into digital value.
- **Algae Scope** develops sustainable alternatives to PFAS (toxic and polluting chemical substances) by processing marine algae into a natural, non-toxic powder capable of making fabrics and materials water-repellent and flame-retardant.

Applications for the 2027 edition of Eni Award are currently open. The deadline for submissions is 20 November 2026.

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