# Syensqo awards its €300k Ernest Solvay Prize to Xiaowei Zhuang

## For groundbreaking methods that reveal where and how cells function and respond to change

Brussels, January 16, 2026

Syensqo, through the Syensqo Fund, has awarded the 2026 Ernest Solvay Prize to Professor Xiaowei Zhuang, Harvard University and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, for her pioneering work in developing powerful imaging techniques that allow scientists to map and visualize the inner organization of cells and tissues at an unprecedented scale. Her research has fundamentally changed how scientists observe biological systems and processes and understand how living organisms function at the molecular level.

“I am deeply honored to receive the Ernest Solvay Prize. This recognition highlights the importance of curiosity-driven research and reflects the collective efforts of many talented students, postdocs and collaborators who worked together to make the inner workings of cells and organisms visible and understandable,” said Professor Xiaowei Zhuang.

“It is an honor to award Prof. Xiaowei Zhuang the 2026 Ernest Solvay Prize for her groundbreaking work in advanced molecular and cellular imaging. Her discoveries have opened new ways to study life at its most fundamental level as we can now map how an organism functions and responds to change. The Prize reflects our deep belief that fundamental research fuels long-term innovation and celebrates bold science that advances human progress, improves lives, and helps build a more sustainable future”, said Mike Radossich, CEO of Syensqo.

Building on the legacy of the 1911 Solvay Conference, the Ernest Solvay Prize celebrates breakthrough scientific discoveries that shape the chemistry of tomorrow. Established in 2013, it has honored researchers whose work drives human progress. Previous laureates, Prof. Ben Feringa, Prof. Carolyn Bertozzi, Dr. Katalin Karikó, Prof. Susumu Kitagawa and Prof. Omar Yaghi, have all gone on to receive Nobel Prizes after being awarded the Ernest Solvay Prize.

The laureate of this seventh edition was selected by an independent jury of renowned scientists:

- **Sven Lidin**, president of the Ernest Solvay Prize jury, professor of inorganic chemistry at Lund University;
- **Donna G. Blackmond**, professor of chemistry and the John C. Martin Endowed Chair in Chemistry at Scripps Research, California;
- **Steven Chu**, recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize in Physics, former US secretary of energy, professor at Stanford University;
- **Ben Feringa**, recipient of the 2016 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, laureate of the 2015 Solvay Prize, professor at the University of Groningen;
- **Laura Gagliardi**, Richard and Kathy Leventhal Professor at the University of Chicago;
- **Susumu Kitagawa**, recipient of the 2025 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, laureate of the 2017 Solvay Prize, professor at Kyoto University.

The award ceremony will be held at the Palais des Académies in Brussels on March 10, 2026.

## Related media

See available pictures on the website.

## About Syensqo

Syensqo is a science company developing groundbreaking solutions that enhance the way we live, work, travel and play. Inspired by the scientific councils which Ernest Solvay initiated in 1911, we bring great minds together to push the limits of science and innovation for the benefit of our customers, with a diverse, global team of more than 13,000 associates in 30 countries.

Our solutions contribute to safer, cleaner, and more sustainable products found in homes, food and consumer goods, planes, cars, batteries, smart devices and healthcare applications. Our innovation power enables us to deliver on the ambition of a circular economy and explore breakthrough technologies that advance humanity.

Learn more at www.syensqo.com.

## About the Syensqo Fund

The Syensqo Fund is Syensqo's philanthropic vehicle, rooted in our corporate citizenship mindset. The Syensqo Fund, in partnership with King Baudouin Foundation, creates lasting positive change by supporting initiatives across four core pillars: Protecting the Planet, Nurturing Innovation, Fostering Education, and Supporting Solidarity. The fund commits to safeguarding the environment through

sustainable practices, driving forward groundbreaking innovations, empowering communities through education, and fostering a culture of solidarity and support for those in need, with the objective to build a better, more equitable world for present and future generations.

Learn more at https://fund.syensqo.com/

## About the Science for the Future Ernest Solvay Prize by Syensqo

In 1911, Ernest Solvay brought 24 of the world's most brilliant minds together to advance scientific research at the first Solvay Conference, a tradition that continues to this day. This extraordinary convergence of scientific explorers is the foundation for Syensqo. Previously known as the Solvay Prize, the Science for the Future Ernest Solvay Prize by Syensqo builds on the company's legacy, by honoring one of the world's foremost explorers in the field of chemistry.

Since 2013, the prize has recognized major scientific discoveries that have the potential to shape the chemistry of tomorrow and promote human progress. Every two years, the most prominent researcher is awarded a €300,000 prize.

Previous prize laureates include Professor Peter G. Schultz in 2013, Professor Ben Feringa in 2015, Professor Susumu Kitagawa in 2017, Professor Carolyn Bertozzi in 2020, Professor Katalin Karikó in 2022 and Professor Omar Yaghi in 2024. Pr. B. Feringa, Pr. C. Bertozzi, Dr. K. Karikó, Pr. S. Kitagawa and Pr. O. Yaghi have all gone on to receive Nobel Prizes, in 2016, 2022, 2023 and 2025 respectively.

Learn more at www.fund.syensqo.com/nurturing-innovation/ernest-solvay-prize

## About Professor Xiaowei Zhuang

Xiaowei Zhuang is an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) and the David B. Arnold Professor of Science at Harvard University. She pioneered the development of super-resolution imaging and genome-scale imaging methods. She invented stochastic optical reconstruction microscopy (STORM), a super-resolution imaging method that broke the diffraction limit and allowed light microscopy with nanometer-scale resolution. Using STORM, she discovered novel molecular structures in cells. She invented a genome-scale imaging method, multiplexed error-robust fluorescence in situ hybridization (MERFISH), which enabled spatially resolved single-cell transcriptomics, 3D genomics, epigenomics, and functional genomics. Using MERFISH, she made discoveries in areas ranging from the molecular signatures, spatial organization, and functions of cells in the complex tissues to the 3D genome organization and gene regulation in cells.

Zhuang received her undergraduate training from the University of Science and Technology of China, her Ph.D. degree under the supervision of Prof. Y. R. Shen from the University of California at Berkeley and her postdoctoral training under the supervision of Prof. Steven Chu at Stanford University. She received honorary doctorate degrees from the Stockholm University, the Delft University of Technology, and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Zhuang is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Medicine, and the American Academy of

Arts and Sciences, a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, a member of the American Philosophical Society, and a foreign associate of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the European Molecular Biology Organization. Her awards include the National Inventors Hall of Fame, the Dreyfus Prize in Chemical Sciences, the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences, the Heinrich Wieland Prize, the Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics, the Lurie Prize in Biomedical Sciences, the Vilcek Prize in Biomedical Science, the Pearl Meister Greengard Prize, the National Academy of Sciences Award for Scientific Discovery, the Raymond and Beverly Sackler International Prize in Biophysics, the Max Delbruck Prize in Biological Physics, the MacArthur Fellowship, etc.

Learn more at http://zhuang.harvard.edu

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