

Higgs Boson scientists win top Spanish prize

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British physicist Peter Higgs (R) speaks with Belgium physicist Francois Englert at a press conference on July 4, 2012 at European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) offices in Meyrin near Geneva. A British physicist and his Belgian colleague who all but identified the mysterious "God particle" that holds the universe together won a prestigious Spanish science prize on Wednesday.

A British physicist and his Belgian colleague who all but identified the mysterious "God particle" that holds the universe together won a prestigious Spanish science prize on Wednesday.

Peter Higgs, 84, who gave his name to the Higgs Boson, an elusive subatomic particle, and Francois Englert, 80, won the Prince of Asturias [science prize](#), one of a series of top annual awards.

They won it jointly with the European Organisation for [Nuclear Research](#) (CERN), which runs the huge underground particle-smashing chamber in Switzerland where experiments to track down the boson take place.

The two scientists separately developed theories of the particle's existence in the 1960s, in Englert's case with the help of another Belgian, Robert Brout, who died in 2011.

Higgs, a physics professor at Edinburgh University, theorised that the boson was what gave mass to matter as the Universe cooled after the Big Bang.

Nearly half a century later, in July 2012 CERN announced that they had found a particle likely to be the Higgs.

[CERN](#) has since cited new evidence strengthening the likelihood that the particle is indeed the Higgs boson, but it says further analysis is needed to confirm it under the [Standard Model of particle physics](#).

In theory, the Higgs exists as an invisible field, interacting with other particles to provide them mass. Without it, humans and all other joined-up atoms in the Universe would not exist.

"The discovery of the [Higgs boson](#) is a prime example of how Europe has led a collective effort to solve one of the deepest mysteries of physics," the prize foundation said in a statement.

An expert at the Spanish National Particle Physics Centre, Antonio Pich,

told AFP: "With this model we can understand the current universe and take ourselves back in time to understand how the universe evolved right from the first [milliseconds](#)."

The Prince of Asturias awards are given in the fields of arts, communication and humanities, scientific and technical research, social science, letters, international cooperation, international understanding and sport.

Named after Crown Prince Felipe, the 50,000-euro (\$65,000) prizes are presented in the northern Spanish city of Oviedo, capital of the northern Asturias region, in a ceremony broadcast live on Spanish television in October.

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