Kering launches sustainable innovation prize in China with start-up accelerator Plug and Play

By Dominique Muret - December 7, 2018

Innovation, sustainable development and the Chinese market: three key levers for boosting growth in the luxury goods industry which Kering, in partnership with start-up accelerator Plug and Play, has wrapped up together in a single project presented on Friday in Beijing. It is the newly created Kering Prize for sustainable innovation, launched by the French luxury group in China with the goal of identifying those start-ups capable of finding disruptive solutions to make fashion and luxury goods sourcing more sustainable.

The award’s mission is “to identify innovative start-ups and technologies in China that are able to improve the textile industry’s value chain in environmental and social terms. Kering is specifically looking for start-ups which tackle the challenges of alternative raw materials, the green supply chain, the retail business and the circular economy,” wrote Kering in a press release.

With Plug and Play, the Californian technology accelerator and investment fund which has teamed up with Kering since 2017, the French luxury group has created online application forms for the award’s Chinese entrants. The project selection phase will last from December 2018 to August 2019, and is headed by Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of International Institutional Affairs at Kering.

In September, the award’s three winners will be chosen by a jury of experts in the fields of fashion, luxury, entrepreneurship, sustainable development and innovation, including Jinqing Cai, President Greater China for Kering.

The winners will benefit from a full mentorship programme and will be able to tap the professional networks of both Kering and Plug and Play. They will also have the chance to meet fashion industry and innovation leaders in
Europe and the USA, and the main winner will also receive a €100,000 prize. The award ceremony will take place in autumn 2019, during a conference on sustainable development.

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