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Equality of opportunities in geosciences: The EGU Awards Committee experience

Thomas Blunier

University of Copenhagen, Niels Bohr Institute, Physics of Ice, Climate and Earth, Copenhagen, Denmark
(blunier@nbi.ku.dk)

EGU, the European Geosciences Union, is Europe's premier geosciences union, dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the Earth, planetary, and space sciences for the benefit of humanity, worldwide. Every year, the EGU awards and medals programme recognises eminent scientists for their outstanding research contribution in the Earth, planetary and space sciences. In addition, it identifies the awardees as role models for the next generation of early career scientists to foster geoscience research.

Nominations for all the medals and awards are submitted every year online by 15 June by the members of the EGU scientific community. Any person can be nominated except the EGU president, vice-president council members (not including ex-officio members) and chairs of the EGU committees. The EGU Council, the medal and award committees' members and the Union and division officers are committed to soliciting nominations of deserving individuals by avoiding conflicts of interest. Each EGU medal or award is selected through a rigorous assessment of the candidates and their merits through the respective committee. The procedures for nomination, selection of candidates and the time schedule are described in detail on EGU websites.

It is a strict necessity when recognizing scientific excellence by any scientific association providing equal opportunities and ensuring balance. The processes and procedures that lead to the recognition of excellence has to be transparent and free of gender biases. However, establishment of clear and transparent evaluation criteria and performance metrics in order to provide equal opportunities to researchers across gender, continents and ethnic groups can be challenging since the definition of scientific excellence is often elusive.

This presentation aims to present the experience and the efforts of the European Geosciences Union to ensure equal opportunities. Data and statistics will be presented in the attempt to provide constructive indications to get to the target of giving equal opportunities to researchers across gender, continents and ethnic groups.