

Awards Subgroup Update

GEO 21st Programme Board Meeting

28 – 30 September 2021

Awards Team Co-Lead

Awards Subgroup

- Members
 - ESIP: Kathy Fontaine – co-lead
 - Ghana: Amos Kabo-bah – co-lead
 - Canada: Marie-Josée Bourassa
 - China: Guifei Jing
 - Germany: Carsten Dettmann
 - UK: Nathalie Pettorelli
 - IAG: Allison Craddock
 - WDS: Karen Payne
 - WDS: Bapon Fakhruddin
 - INPE: Gilberto Camara
 - GEOSec: Craig Larlee
- Timeline from https://www.earthobservations.org/geo_blog_obs.php?id=523:
 - Call for nominations published on GEO website on August 24, 2021.
 - Nominations Submission Deadline – Extended to Oct 15, 2021.
 - Finalists selected and notified – October/November 2021.
 - Award Ceremony – during GEO Week

Key Points

- Met to discuss lessons from previous years
 - Revised process and nomination form
- Released in August, however a technical issue prevented the notice from going out, hence the revised due date.
- As of right now (30 Sept 2021), 1 submission

- Group to discuss a Group/Team Excellence Award with inputs from EO4SDG team.

Revised Form – Nominee Information

Nominee's full name:

Nominee's email address:

Nominee's GEO Member, Participating Organization or Associate:

Nominee's association with GEO (GEO Work Programme activity, Working Group, etc. List all that apply):

Basis for nomination (Brief two or three sentence summary):

Does the nominee identify as (optional, for self-nominations):

Man Woman Non-binary Other

In which country does the nominee currently reside?

Revised Form – Nominator and References

Part 2: Nominator and References

If this is a self-nomination, the name of the nominee should appear in the nominator's name field and other information for the nominator may be left blank. Two references must be provided for self-nominations.

If the nomination is by a person other than the nominee, only the nominator and first reference must be provided. The second reference may be left blank.

Nominator's full name:

Nominator's email address:

Nominator's organization:

Nominator's relationship to the nominee:

Reference #1 full name:

Reference #1 email address:

Reference #1 organization:

Reference #1 relationship to the nominee:

Reference #2 full name:

Reference #2 email address:

Reference #2 organization:

Reference #2 relationship to the nominee:

Revised Form – Supporting Evidence

Please describe the nominee’s key accomplishments in the past five years and how these have led to concrete impacts for the GEO community. For example: a new sustained community organized; EO-related discussions or language taken up and sustained in new fora; youth involvement in EO-related initiatives; persistently working on day-to-day tasks to enable progress by a community/Flagship/ Initiative.

Please describe how the accomplishments described above demonstrated innovation in style or approach to tackling challenges. For example: setting up a new framework to facilitate decision making; the development of new collaborations with non-traditional partners outside the GEO community; the inclusion of EDI principles as a driver for project governance and implementation.

Please describe how the nominee’s efforts were consistent with GEO’s strategic vision and mission.

Rating Form

**Criteria: Please rate the effectiveness of the criteria on a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being least effective and 5 being most effective.

1. Accomplishment demonstrated by concrete impact, such as a new, sustained community organized; EO-related discussions or language taken up and sustained in new fora; youth involvement in EO-related initiatives; persistently working on day-to-day tasks to enable progress by a community/Flagship/Initiative.

Rating (1 - 5): _____

Please provide supporting commentary for your rating.

2. Innovation in style or approach to tackling challenges.

Rating (1 - 5): _____

Please provide supporting commentary for your rating.

3. Nominee's efforts are **consistent with GEO's core values and principles**.

Rating (1 - 5): _____

Please provide supporting commentary for your rating.

***taken verbatim from the criteria printed in the call*

Next Steps

- Send reminders to Regional GEOs via PB (no mailing list to our knowledge)
 - Note that self-nomination is permitted/encouraged
 - Note that the best nominations incorporate criteria text
- Set up SG telecons for review discussion and selection
- Send winners' nomination packages to the PB prior to GEO Week.

Tips for Writing Good Nominations

- **Give yourself enough time.** Most awards programs give applicants plenty of time. The majority of submissions, however, come in at the last minute. A judge knows immediately who spent time preparing a thoughtful award submission and who didn't.
- **Read the question.** It's amazing how often the person submitting an award entry doesn't bother to read the questions. Every contest has a different focus. They have peculiar quirks. You cannot write a generic entry and submit it to every contest. It doesn't work.
- **Stay on point.** Make sure your answer addresses the question directly. This is not a chance for you to veer off into a different direction to profile something you want the judges to know. Stay on topic and know the judge is most grateful when they have an answer they can easily grade.
- **Don't skip questions.** Sounds obvious, right? You'd be surprised how many people skip questions. Every question left unanswered results in a judge marking down your application. Judges almost always work on a points system where the highest score wins. If you garner no points for an entire question or category, you're likely taking yourself out of the running for a win.
- **Follow directions to the letter.** Make sure every bit of required information is submitted with your original entry. Judges probably won't be able to contact you if something is missing or incomplete. Most awards programs have a checklist of information needed to complete an application. Make sure to use it and tick off each item before you send your application off.
- **Enlist help early.** If you wait until a day or two before the deadline to look for someone to help you write an award entry, you're better off not bothering. My inbox is regularly flooded with last-minute requests to help fill out applications for major awards. My phone rings continuously on those final days. While I would love to help everyone, it's impossible to take on most of this work in good conscience.
 - You can't write a thoughtful entry at the last minute; you just can't.
 - You don't have enough time to interview a candidate, write the award, get it proofread and approved in a day or two.
 - If I lose my mind and take on one of these projects, one is all a person can handle. If I get 10 calls on the final day, at least nine of them are turned away.
 - You don't want the same writer to prepare your application if they're already working on others in the same contest.
- **Tell a story.** Have mercy on the poor judge who has 35, 80 or even a hundred applications to read. You can make your entry stand out by deploying [brand storytelling techniques](#). It works; believe me.
- **Read your submission aloud.** Before you send off your award entry, stand up and read it using your normal speaking voice. You'll be amazed at how the act of getting on your feet and using your full voice uncovers clumsy sentences and other errors affecting the readability of your submission.

More Tips

- Focus on 2-3 keywords per answer
 - Look for opportunities to inject the keywords from the question into your answer. Let's say you have invested in hiring a new staff member in the last 12 months to manage your digital marketing. We could spin this a number of ways: it could demonstrate growth in your business, innovation if your new hire is helping you pivot in a new direction, or leadership and forward-thinking, if it places you at the forefront of the industry. By positioning your answer as closely as possible to the criteria, you're increasing your chances of favourable attention.
- Make sure you answer the question
 - Sounds obvious, I know, but this is actually quite common. You start off answering the question, "How do you demonstrate innovation in your business?" and 300 words later you realised you've prattled on about something else entirely.
- Keep it simple and specific
 - Don't overcomplicate your submission to sound fancy with big words and bigger sentences. Judges are reading dozens, perhaps scores or even hundreds of applications – the last thing you want to do is make their job harder, so they gloss over and potentially miss all the best bits! Keep it simple and be as specific as possible, with as many metrics, facts and figures as you can muster up. What has revenue growth been? Have staff or resources increased? How have you invested in new tech and what other aspects of your business can you quantify?

Even More Tips

- Consider gender, geographical and generational diversity when determining who to nominate.
- Look at previous submissions to see what a ‘winning’ nomination write-up includes.
- Use the words in the criteria when answering your questions. It helps the reviewers see the logic behind the answer.
- Make linkages clear to the reviewers.
 - If you are describing a project that is a contribution to GEO, make it clear *how* it is a contribution to GEO, and the role the nominee plays, with respect to the Criteria. Reviewers cannot read between the lines.