

IUGS Early Career Award

1. Rationale for the award

The purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding research contributions by an early career scientist.

2. Awardee profile

Nominees should (i) have contributed to geologic knowledge through original research that marks a major advance in the Earth sciences and (ii) be within 10 years after the award of his/her PhD degree at the time of the deadline for the presentation of nominations. Any period of long-term career disruption taken since receiving their degree will not count towards the time limit. Active officers of the various IUGS bodies and initiatives are excluded.



Dr. Mónica Sánchez-Román

Citation for Dr. Mónica Sónchez-Romõn

Dr. Mónica Sánchez-Román is an accomplished international scientist, known for her research in geochemistry and geomicrobiology of carbonate deposits and iron-rich acid mine drainages. Her research work and its impact span multiple countries, cultures, and languages. With B.S. and M.S. degrees from University of Granada (Spain) and a Ph.D. from the Swiss Federal Institute Technology (Switzerland), she landed a coveted NASA postdoc in the USA, followed by a research scientist position at the National Institute of Aerospace Technology in Madrid, Spain. Now as assistant professor at Vrije Universiteit in the Netherlands, Monica is building a visible program with interdisciplinary collaborations, aimed at expanding the toolbox for detecting isotopic signals and biosignatures from combined field and laboratory approaches. As a dedicated academic, she is known for her enthusiastic teaching and mentoring, desiring to

bring out the best in students. She has made tremendous personal sacrifices to stay in the geosciences, juggling a young family with her husband in another country, while maintaining a cutting-edge research program involving students, and a rigorous ethic of service to professional societies and journals. She is a strong model for women in geoscience world-wide; one who exemplifies the international collaborative spirit that will best move our science forward in the future. Congratulations Dr. Sánchez-Román, first recipient of the IUGS Early Career Award!

Marjorie A. Chan

Distinguished Professor of Geology

University of Utah

Salt Lake City, Utah. USA

**Citation Response by Dr. Mónica
Sánchez-Romón**

Distinguished Professor Marjorie Chan, thank you for your kind words. I am deeply honoured to receive this new year's IUGS Early Career Award and am delighted to be part of this awards ceremony. This is truly a dream come true for me to be recognized by the esteemed and prestigious international organisation of IUGS. I also express my most sincere congratulations to fellow IUGS award recipients as well as to the nominees; all of them demonstrate great contributions and personal dedication to the wide field of Earth Sciences research.

First, I would like to thank those who nominated me and supported my nomination. I especially want to acknowledge my whole family who have always encouraged me to follow my passions. Professor Judy Ann McKenzie introduced me to the exciting field of microbial carbonates and gave me the opportunity to conduct my PhD at ETH-Zurich.

This award not only belongs to me but also to all my colleagues who worked as a team and produced fantastic results. This recognition allows me to publicly thank all the people and institutions that provided the support, infrastructure, and funding for our research. They have all made it possible for me to be celebrating this award.

For more than 10 years, I have been part of several research groups at ETH-Zurich (Switzerland), NASA Astrobiology Institute (USA), National Institute of Aerospace Technology (Spain), and also at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands). I have shared many hours in very good and sometimes not-so-good situations with terrific colleagues who have helped me persevere in the pursuit of excellence in science and research. I am fortunate to be associated with these tremendous scientists and laboratories that have positively impacted my science and broadened my views. I take this opportunity to pay them a well-deserved tribute.

I am proud to be the first scientist and the first woman to receive this Early Career Award. I want to dedicate this to all the international women working in science and academia who often struggle to overcome many hurdles to reach success. We are globally diverse professors, scientists, colleagues, and mentors that can collectively inspire students to advance our knowledge of Earth and the balance of all its systems, and to explore new worlds beyond our own planet. I am honored to be a part of this international community.

Thus, Mr. President, again I thank you, and those who nominated me. I am extremely pleased to accept this wonderful award.

