

ABC/J Research Awards 2026 for Early Career Scientists

The Geoverbund ABC/J is the geoscientific network in the Aachen-Bonn-Cologne/Jülich research region. It brings together [the geoscientific institutes](#) of RWTH Aachen University, the University of Bonn, the University of Cologne and the Forschungszentrum Jülich. The cooperation pools and networks the expertise in geoscientific research and teaching that has been acquired at these institutions over several decades.

Research focuses on the dynamic Earth-human system. Together, the scientists of the ABC/J region identify urgent and future issues in the fields of the evolution of Earth and life, the dynamics and processes of the Earth system in global change, the sustainable use and conservation of geo-resources and geo-hazards, vulnerability and resilience, and develop possible solutions that extend beyond the region.

Geoverbund ABC/J is committed to the continuous development of the ABC/J region by creating attractive conditions for excellent research and student education. In 2026, for the 16th time, Geoverbund ABC/J will award the Geoverbund ABC/J Research Award for outstanding, innovative and interdisciplinary research in the field of geosciences, including geography. The first prize is €2,000, with further awards for second (€1,500) and third (€1,000) place.

What can be submitted as an entry?

The subject of the competition is research activity with a geoscientific or geographical focus. Such activity may be demonstrated either by a doctoral thesis or by one or more publications that have appeared in SCI or SCIE referred journals. Submissions made to previous competitions are not eligible for re-submission.

Who can apply?

The competition is open to all scientists whose work is based on or has been developed [at an institute affiliated to Geoverbund ABC/J](#). Generally, the date of the doctorate should not be more than four years ago; special personal circumstances such as proven periods of parental leave may be considered. The relevant date is 31 January 2026. Proof of the final submission of the doctoral thesis is sufficient for an application.

About the award process

Submissions will first undergo a pre-selection by a jury. Only the pre-selected works will then be evaluated by independent reviewers based on research excellence, degree of innovation, and interdisciplinarity.

After the review process, the jury will select the prize winners, considering the reviewers' evaluations. The Directorate of Geoverbund ABC/J will formally confirm the jury's decision.

The award ceremony will take place during the Geoverbund ABC/J summer festival, where the prize winners are required to personally accept the prize and present their work in a short talk. The personal acceptance of the prize and the presentation in the form of a short talk are obligatory.

Important information for competition entries that can be classified as basic research

The Geoverbund ABC/J Research Award welcomes innovative and interdisciplinary research in geosciences, including geography. Pure basic research projects are explicitly encouraged and evaluated on research quality alone—not on demonstrable societal relevance. Information on social relevance in the entry form is optional.

How can you apply?

Please submit all required documents until 31 January 2026 via email to:

t.finsterbusch@fz-juelich.de

- **Application Form**
- **Competition Entry** (choose one)
 - Dissertation (usually not older than 4 years), OR
 - One or more publications (accepted for publication within usually max. 4 years after the doctorate; deadline: 31 January 2026) published or accepted for publication in SCI- or SCIE-listed peer-reviewed journals. If submitting multiple publications, include a cover document discussing the content-related connection.
- **Letter of Recommendation**
- **Doctoral degree certificate or proof of final submission of doctoral thesis**
- **Curriculum Vitae**
- **List of Experiences and Activities (if applicable):**
 - Fellowships / third-party funding
 - Career-related prizes and awards
 - Publications
 - Oral presentations
 - Poster presentations

Application Form

ABC/J Research Awards 2026 for Early Career Scientists

Personal Data		
Salutation		
Academic degree		
Given Name		
Surname		
Date of Birth		
Professional title		
Current position		
Contact details	Personal	Business
Street, Number		
Postcode, city		
Country		
Phone		
e-mail		
Identifiers / ORCID (if available)		
Area of scientific specialization (3-4 keywords)		
Submission of doctoral thesis		
Date of doctoral defence (if applicable)		
Date of doctoral certi- ficate (if applicable)		

Competition Entry

Details of the institution to which the competition entry is affiliated to	
Organisation	
Institute	
Street, number	
Postcode, City	

Author of recommendation letter	
Academic degree	
Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Institute	
Street, number	
Postcode, city	
Phone	
e-mail	

Details of the competition entry	
Type	Dissertation Publication Publications incl. accompanying document
Title	
Brief description of the research work in a generally understandable form (max. 2,000 characters, incl. spaces). In case that the candidate is not first author of the competition entry (or at least one publication), please specify the personal contribution(s) subsequently!	

Research achievements

(Please answer the following questions as briefly and precisely as possible!)

1. How does the competition entry add to our knowledge in comparison to the current state of research?

2. Which elements of the competition entry are especially innovative?

3. Which interdisciplinary approaches does the contribution contain?

4. How does your research contribute to topics currently being discussed in society?

Suggestions for reviewers

Please name and provide contact details for six potential reviewers with scientific expertise within the field(s) addressed by the competition entry. The reviewers must be independent, i.e. you may not have joint publications with the reviewers. Furthermore, they must not be direct colleagues within the same research group.

Reviewer No. 1	
Salutation	
Academic degree	
Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Street, Number	
Postcode, city	
Country	
e-mail	

Reviewer No. 2	
Salutation	
Academic degree	
Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Street, Number	
Postcode, city	
Country	
e-mail	

Reviewer No. 3	
Salutation	
Academic degree	
Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Street, Number	
Postcode, city	
Country	
e-mail	

Reviewer No. 4	
Salutation	
Academic degree	
Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Street, Number	
Postcode, city	
Country	
e-mail	

Reviewer No. 5	
Salutation	
Academic degree	

Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Street, Number	
Postcode, city	
Country	
e-mail	

Reviewer No. 6	
Salutation	
Academic degree	
Given Name	
Surname	
Organisation	
Street, Number	
Postcode, city	
Country	
e-mail	

Declaration of the candidate	
	I hereby apply for the Geoverbund ABC/J Award for Early Career Scientists 2026 and certify that the information provided in this form is correct. I am aware that any incorrect information will lead to disqualification.
	I agree that data provided within this form (especially personal details, information related to the competition entry) may be saved and processed within the scope of the competition by Geoverbund ABC/J. Saving and processing of data especially includes forwarding of data to members of the Geoverbund ABC/J steering committee, reviewers, and the selection panel.
	I agree to present the competition entry during the Geoverbund ABC/J summer festival in person and accept that this is a mandatory prerequisite for being awarded.
	In the event of being awarded, I hereby agree that Geoverbund ABC/J is entitled to edit, use and disseminate the information provided within this form for public relations. Dissemination especially includes provision of information via homepage and social media channels of Geoverbund ABC/J.
	In the event of being awarded, I provide a photograph of myself for publication on the website and social media channels of Geoverbund ABC/J. In addition, I agree that photographs taken of me during the award ceremony may be used for public relations purposes.

Place, Date and Name