



# International Association of Geoanalysts

<http://geoanalyst.org>

## IAG EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER AWARDS

This year, the IAG launched a new grant programme specifically aimed at scientists from under-represented nations to enable them to gain access to state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and provide them with a better understanding of analytical instrumentation and geochemical applications. Our **Developing Country Early Career Scientists Award** consists of a research grant of up to 9,000 USD plus an 18-month membership of the IAG.



We are delighted to announce that the first recipient of this award is **Wilédio Marc-Emile Bonzi**, who is currently a lecturer in economic geology at the Daniel Ouezzin Coulibaly University in Dédougou, Burkina Faso.

The subject of his PhD awarded in 2021 was the origin, evolution and rare metals mineralisation of pegmatites from West Africa, in which he was jointly supervised by academics at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and the University Paul Sabatier, Toulouse, France.

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He will be using his IAG grant to develop his PhD topic further by looking at the fractionation of rare metal-bearing minerals (Nb, Ta, REE, Y) in pegmatites through the microgeochemistry of accessory minerals (EPMA, SEM, U-Pb dating) and the petrology of associated migmatitic rocks. This will help to clarify whether the pegmatites underwent conditions favourable to concentrating rare metals. His programme of work will involve fieldwork to map and characterise the relevant pegmatite dikes, preparation of thin sections for preliminary petrographic analysis prior to spending time at universities in Leuven, Belgium and Toulouse, France undertaking EPMA, SEM, and LA-ICP-MS analyses. The IAG grant will allow him to access some of the essential technologies for his research and continue to develop his analytical skills.



In contrast, our **IAG Early Career Researcher Award** was first awarded in 2006. This year's winner is **Xiuhong Liao**, who is an associate professor at the Gemmological Institute, China University of Geosciences (CUG).

Her research focuses on advancing analytical methods and developing reference materials for isotopic and elemental analysis in geochemistry and gemmology using LA-(MC-)ICP-MS. During her PhD (2017–2023) at the State Key

Laboratory of Geological Processes and Mineral Resources, CUG, she developed a laser ablation solution sampling method for (MC-)ICP-MS. This technique overcomes the limitations of traditional nebulisation by improving analyte transport, reducing interferences, and minimizing sample consumption. She successfully applied it to a range of sample types, including geological materials, wine, porewater and to boron isotopic analysis. Since completing her PhD, she has focused on the development of reference materials for isotopic and elemental analysis by LA-(MC-)ICP-MS in gemmology, including the development of tourmaline megacrysts for boron isotopic analysis and pressed pearl powder pellets for Sr isotope measurements.

As part of her IAG award, she presented her research on the use of short-pulse LA-MC-ICP-MS to differentiate between saltwater and freshwater pearls at the 2025 Goldschmidt conference. The link to her abstract is <https://conf.goldschmidt.info/goldschmidt/2025/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/26866>.

## IAG HONORARY FELLOWSHIP



Prof Phil Potts receiving a gift of a commemorative rose from IAG President Prof Jacob as a token of the IAG's gratitude for all his endeavours on behalf of the IAG since its inception.

On rare occasions, the IAG bestows its most prestigious award of an Honorary Fellowship on distinguished scientists in recognition of the contribution he or she has made to geoanalytical science over their lifetime. The latest person to receive this award is Prof Phil Potts, Emeritus Professor of Geoanalysis at the Open University, UK.

For those who know Phil, this will come as no surprise as the IAG and *Geostandards and Geoanalytical Research (GGR)* owe him a great debt of gratitude for many of its present and past accomplishments. Not only was Phil one of the prominent architects behind the IAG's formation, but he then instigated the IAG proficiency testing programme *GeoPT*, developed the IAG's certification activities, as well as negotiated the deal with the publishers Blackwell (now Wiley) to secure *GGR*'s commercial future. Phil was the IAG's second President (2000–2003) when the Association was still developing its role, and he designed a strategic plan to put it on a firmer financial footing. Throughout the IAG's history, Phil has never ceased to think strategically in promoting our science and its practitioners.

One of the IAG's most significant achievements was the *GeoPT* proficiency testing programme for silicate rock analysis, which will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. Prof Potts was essential to the *GeoPT* programme both behind the scenes and by extracting extra value from the results, easily accessed by a series of published papers that evaluate the contents of many *GeoPT* reports in depth.

Amongst his substantial contributions to the field of geoanalysis was the publication of his 'Handbook of Silicate Rock Analysis' (Blackie 1987). Inevitably much of the content has become outdated because of developments in instrumentation and knowledge advancements, so for several years, he has been working on a new edition with the assistance of experts in various analytical techniques. This has now come to fruition as revised chapters are being published as a comprehensive series in *Geostandards and Geoanalytical Research*.

To mark the award of his IAG Honorary Fellowship, Prof Potts gave a lecture entitled '*The role of the consensus values in the certification of geological reference materials*' at an IAG Council meeting at Wiley's offices in Oxford, UK. This provided an opportunity for him to reflect on the evaluation of data quality after nearly 30 years of the *GeoPT* proficiency testing programme and related certifications. A recording of the webinar is available on our website ([www.geoanalyst.org](http://www.geoanalyst.org)).