

SEMNI Mentor Award Manuel Casteleiro

Objective :

Launch Mentor Award « Manuel Casteleiro » among the members of SEMNI.

Motivation :

The SEMNI Mentor Award recognizes outstanding individuals who show exceptional dedication to nurturing the next generation of computational scientists. While SEMNI already honors scientific excellence through its established awards, this particular award highlights those who invest their time, knowledge, and energy in guiding and supporting young researchers throughout their academic journey.

Many of us owe our own successes to mentors who not only taught us research methodologies but also helped us navigate the complexities of academia, supported us through challenges, and served as inspiring role models. The significance of such guidance becomes especially clear when young investigators themselves begin mentoring, experiencing firsthand both the rewards and responsibilities it entails.

This award celebrates those who promote independence in young researchers, foster inclusive research environments, and demonstrate sustained commitment to their mentees' growth across different career stages. While teaching excellence is highly valued, the SEMNI Mentor Award specifically honors mentorship beyond the traditional classroom, emphasizing activities that enhance mentees' research skills, career development, and integration into the broader scientific community.

Inspired by the ECCOMAS Mentor Award, SEMNI proposes the creation of a national-level award to recognize and celebrate researchers in this association who dedicate their time and effort to guiding and supporting the next generation of scientists. This award aims to highlight the value of mentorship beyond academic excellence, promoting inclusive research environments and fostering the professional and personal development of young researchers at all stages of their careers.

General :

- There is no prize money envisaged
- Awarded every two years at the opening ceremony of the SEMNI congresses (CMN in Spain)
- Not a teaching award
- In the first round, we aim for one awardee but will adapt according to the number and quality of nominations (possibly 2-3 awardees in total). This will then be adapted in the following rounds.
- This award will be awarded every two years.

Selection Criteria

1. Fosters Professional Development and Research Training

A great mentor shares knowledge and experience while balancing guidance with fostering independence. Through regular meetings and open communication, they inspire scientific thinking and guide research development. They dedicate time to each mentee, providing support in skills such as paper writing, grant applications, and research methodology, particularly for early academic endeavors. Mentors remain accessible, offering timely feedback and encouragement.

2. Promotes Research Independence and Career Support

Outstanding mentors prepare mentees for careers in academia and industry, gradually transferring responsibilities to cultivate scientific independence. They support mentees in building their own research identity, securing grants, and gaining visibility in the scientific community. Mentors actively introduce mentees to professional networks, facilitating connections at national, European, and international levels, and continue support beyond the formal mentorship period.

3. Builds an Inclusive and Collaborative Environment

A great mentor fosters a welcoming, inclusive environment where every team member can thrive. They consider individual circumstances, promote positive team spirit, and encourage collaboration within and across research groups, disciplines, and sectors. By maintaining relationships with former mentees and an active alumni network, they create a sustainable and supportive research community.

4. Serves as a Role Model

Exceptional mentors lead by example, demonstrating integrity, ethical conduct, and best scientific practices. They include mentees in decision-making, explain rationales, and model open-science principles. By inspiring mentees to become effective mentors themselves, they contribute to a lasting culture of mentorship and support the broader community of young researchers.

Note: The mentor's scientific excellence is not considered in the evaluation; the focus is on mentorship quality and impact on mentee development.

Nomination Process

1. Eligibility

Nominees must be active members of the SEMNI community and must not have received this award previously.

Nominators must be former mentees of the nominee, with both formal and informal mentorships accepted. Mentorship across all career stages is eligible (during studies, PhD, postdoc, or early-career researcher). At least one nominator must have been supervised during their PhD. Nominators can come from academia or industry, and each person may nominate only one mentor.

2. Nomination

Coordination: One mentee acts as the nomination manager, and all documents must be submitted as a single package (nominations must be submitted as a single PDF file coordinated by one nominator.).

Required documents:

Cover Letter (max. 2 pages): Introduces the nominee with a short biography, explains what makes them special as a mentor, describes the mentoring environment, and provides examples addressing the selection criteria. Multiple mentees may sign the letter, specifying type and duration of mentorship and current positions.

Four Personal Letters/Impact Statements (max. 1 page each): Describe personal experiences with the mentor, highlighting qualities, impact on professional and personal development, and specific examples of mentorship. Letters should explain what the mentor did to support and promote mentee growth, and what distinguishes them from other outstanding mentors. These letters can be of researchers from any nationality, not necessarily affiliated to SEMNI.

Nominators information : Information on the type and duration of mentorship and current positions of all nominators.

3. Important Notes

The call will be distributed via the SEMNI mailing list, as with other awards.

Nominators' names will remain confidential.

The award focuses exclusively on mentorship quality; it is **not** a teaching award.

Selection Process

The SEMNI Mentor Award recipient is chosen by an independent Selection Committee of 4 international young researchers, potentially members from the ECCOMAS Young Investigators Committee (EYIC) but not compulsory. The committee reflects the fairness towards candidates. Members must confirm the absence of conflicts of interest, recusing themselves if they have personal or professional connections with any nominee.

Evaluation focuses solely on the quality and impact of mentorship, following the criteria defined in the call. Particular attention is given to the nominee's ability to:

Foster professional development and academic skills;

Promote mentee independence and support diverse career paths;

Create inclusive and collaborative environments across sectors and borders;

Serve as a role model of scientific integrity and mentorship excellence.

The committee deliberates collectively, may use anonymous ranking tools to shortlist and vote, and final decisions are made by majority vote. The EYIC coordinates the process and communicates the outcome to SEMNIj and the SEMNI Executive Committee.

Important note: The evaluation focuses on the mentor's qualities, not the nominators', even though they prepare the nomination.

All candidates can be proposed to the ECCOMAS Mentor AWARD regardless of the result of the SEMNI Mentor AWARD.

Clarifications

SEMNIj coordinates the nomination and evaluation process for the SEMNI Mentor Award. This includes publishing and distributing the call for nominations, communicating with nominators, organizing the evaluation and voting procedures, and submitting a written report with the selection results to the SEMNI Executive and Managing Boards.

The Mentor Award Selection Committee evaluates nominees based on four main criteria:

- Fostering professional development and research training;
- Promoting research independence and providing career support;
- Creating inclusive and collaborative research environments;
- Serving as a role model of scientific integrity and mentorship excellence.

The Mentor Award Selection Committee is authorized to adapt the procedure described in this document as necessary. Any modifications must be reported in writing to the President and Secretary General of SEMNI and SEMNIj. This document has been approved by EYIC (ECCOMAS).