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IAPT

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Recommendation letter for Jay Edneil Olivar,

The Philippines is a megadiverse country, containing two-thirds of the Earth's biodiversity and 70 percent of world's plants and animal species. Despite this, knowledge gaps still exist in terms of the extent, assemblage, and origin of Philippine biodiversity. Mr Olivar's research project entitled "Systematics of Philippine *Cyrtandra* J.R.Forst. & G.Forst. (Gesneriaceae)" aims to bridge these knowledge gaps by examining biogeographic patterns and underlying processes of diversification in a species-rich genus. Mr Olivar's project has received support from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for e.g. molecular analyses including sequencing and barcoding, as well as a SYNTHESYS+ grant, allowing him to investigate and revise herbarium vouchers in multiple European herbaria. Both fundings highlight the project's scientific merit. To date, one nomenclature paper has been published and one taxonomic manuscript is in press. With aid from the IAPT research grant, highly valuable fieldwork will be made possible which will result to new collections for complete morphological and molecular analyses.

Mr Olivar, being a Filipino, is familiar with conducting fieldwork in the Philippines. He has spent three years as a Research Assistant in a project that required field collection of plants and dealing with procurement of permits and logistics. He will be working with the Center for Biodiversity Research and Extension in Mindanao (CEBREM) for collecting in least sampled areas in the island of Mindanao and he will be visiting their herbarium for sampling and annotation of specimens. He will also visit the Philippine National Herbarium for the same purpose. He is capable of handling morphological and molecular data as he has worked and coauthored (in press) with *Cyrtandra* experts (Hannah Atkins) in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

With this letter, I do recommend Mr Olivar for the IAPT research grant, as his project is highly integrative and thus taking the most out of this fieldwork.

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