

Dr Mario Fernández-Mazuecos

Research fellow

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To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to support the application of **Ms Angélica Gallego-Narbón** for an IAPT Research Grant.

Angélica is an excellent young researcher who started her PhD in 2019 under the supervision of Dr Virginia Valcárcel (Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain) and myself. Her research is focused on understanding the drivers of diversification of the Araliaceae at the worldwide scale, particularly the role of climatic niche evolution in differentiation of tropical and temperate clades of the so-called "Asian Palmate Group".

During her time under my supervision (2019-present), Angélica has stood out for her scientific insight and dedication to the objectives of her PhD thesis. These objectives involve a multidisciplinary combination of approaches, including herbarium, laboratory, bioinformatic and field work. Thus far, she has carried out her tasks efficiently and enthusiastically, thus developing a wide range of skills. I can confirm her deep interest in plant systematics, as well as her willingness to learn new techniques and approaches.

The proposed visit to the National Museum of Natural Sciences of the Smithsonian Institution (Washington DC, USA) would be of great interest for the fulfilment of Angélica's PhD objectives. First, it would give her access to a sizeable collection of Araliaceae specimens at the US National Herbarium, which would be extremely useful for ecomorphological characterization of genera. And second, it would allow her to learn state-of-the-art phylogenomic methods (HybSeq) in the laboratory of the world expert in Araliaceae Dr. Jun Wen. The results of Angelica's visit should achieve a remarkable scientific impact considering that her research will probably be the first to analyse eco-morphological differentiation within a plant clade in such detail. Additionally, the visit will contribute to IAPT community building by bringing together research groups in Europe and North America for the sharing of scientific knowledge, collections, and technical know-how.

Therefore, considering her achievements, experience and personal qualities, as well as the scientific merit and potential impact of the proposal, Angélica would make an excellent candidate for an IAPT Research Grant. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Mario Fernández-Mazuecos, PhD
Madrid, 29th January 2020