



Virginia Valcárcel  
**Virginia Valcárcel Núñez**  
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Campus Canto Blanco  
C./ Darwin N2. Madrid-28049  
[virginia.valcarcel@uam.es](mailto:virginia.valcarcel@uam.es)  
+34914978109  
Re: Angélica Gallego Narbón

Grant Committee Members,

Please accept this letter as a support for Angélica Gallego Narbón's application to the IAPT research grant.

I am the supervisor of the PhD thesis of Angélica. I first met her in a professional interview in June 2018 at the end of the selection process for a PhD candidate. I was looking for a PhD student to apply for a PhD grant call sponsored by my University (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain) to do a thesis on my research project entitled "The Role of Niche Differentiation in the Evolution of Araliaceae: Macro- and microevolutionary processes" (CGL2017-87198-P). I soon realized that Angelica was a good PhD candidate not only for the academic merits she referred in her CV (great University Grades, education in one of the best Spanish University for the Biology Grade), but also because she already had field and lab work experience from her collaboration with one of the best Spanish research teams working on Community Ecology (Dr. Adrian Escudero, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos). However, it was in the interview when the two members of my research team present decided in parallel for her candidacy because she demonstrated to be a highly motivated mature candidate with a clear interest to initiate a scientific career in evolutionary biology.

The maturity she showed in the interview was corroborated soon afterwards when I asked her to write down a proposal for her PhD thesis project addressing the three main objectives of the research project she will be working for. Using the proposal of our research project as reference, Angelica delivered with a mature, well-structured and well-written thesis project draft that with a few changes was the one we submitted for the PhD grant call she managed for.

Angelica got the final resolution of the grant just a few months ago and so she could not join our team until very recently (October 2019). Because of this, my references to her professional performance are short. However, in all the steps Angelica has done in my lab so far, she has shown great efficiency and promising professional skills to become a brilliant young scientist. First, she manages time very well; she is surprisingly fast in finishing the tasks I ask her to do while producing high quality deliverables. Second, she is very active in searching for specialize courses and seminars to complement her training; she has also been very active in literature search and update on our study group despite I provided her with large amount of bibliography. Third, since we chose her as our selected PhD Candidate, we guided her through the three main objectives we wanted her to address in her PhD but asked her to come up with a fourth objective for the final chapter of the thesis. I am very surprised that only three months after, she has already proposed a very interesting topic to her last PhD chapter. Finally, Angélica seems to be have fitted very well with the rest of the members of our research team as well as with the remaining staff of the Botany Commission.

Angelica's visit to the Laboratories Analytic Biology at the National Museum of Natural History would be very helpful both to enhance Angelica's education and improve the outcome of her thesis. During her visit, Angelica will join Dr. Jun Wen team ([WENJ@si.edu](mailto:WENJ@si.edu)). Dr. Jun Wen is one of the world specialists on the family Araliaceae and has the largest herbarium collection of the study group of Angelica. Because of this, the short stay of Angelica in Dr. Jun Wen team will definitely contribute to enrich her training as a young scientist.

I hope my perspective will be helpful to you as you evaluate Angelica's candidacy for an IAPT research grant. Please, feel free to contact me again if you need any further information of my experience with Angelica.

Sincerely yours,

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'V. Valcárcel', written over a faint grid pattern.

Dr. Virginia Valcárcel