



17. March 2026

Slovenian Research And Innovation Agency

Dear Members of the Grant Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the research proposal of Dr. Matjaž Gregorič entitled, "*Nature's Toughest Material: Comparative Study of Bark Spider Major Ampullate Silk,*" submitted to the Public Call for Co-Financing of Research Projects for 2026–2027.

The Philippines represents an exceptionally suitable and strategic location for the successful implementation of this study. As one of the world's recognized megadiverse countries, it harbors a remarkable diversity and endemism of arachnid fauna, including bark spiders (Family Araneidae). These species are known for producing extraordinarily tough major ampullate silk, making them ideal subjects for comparative biomechanical and evolutionary investigations. The country's unique ecological gradients, ranging from lowland tropical forests to montane ecosystems, provide a natural laboratory for examining variation in silk properties across habitats and species.

I am fully committed to supporting this project at all stages of its implementation in the Philippines. Specifically, I will serve as the local coordinator and provide essential logistical and scientific assistance, including:

1. Organizing and facilitating field expeditions, including securing permits and coordinating with local stakeholders;
2. Conducting specimen collection and field documentation in accordance with ethical and scientific standards;
3. Assisting in laboratory work, including sample preparation, preliminary analyses, and data organization;
4. Supporting data analysis, interpretation, and synthesis;
5. Contributing to the preparation of scientific manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals; and
6. Assisting in intellectual property development, including documentation relevant to potential patents arising from the study.

My familiarity with local field conditions, biodiversity resources, and institutional networks ensures that the project will be conducted efficiently, ethically, and in compliance with national regulations. I am confident that this collaboration will significantly contribute to advancing our understanding of biomaterials, while also highlighting the global importance of Philippine biodiversity.

I strongly believe that Dr. Gregorič's proposed research is both scientifically innovative and globally relevant. The outcomes have the potential to contribute not only to fundamental science but also to applied fields such as materials engineering, biotechnology, and conservation.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I am honored to support this endeavor and look forward to contributing to its success.

Sincerely,

DR. ALMA B. MOHAGAN

Professor VI

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