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From: John Pickering <pick@discoverlife.org>  
Subject: Letter of support for IBISCA; partnership with Discover Life  
Cc: dl@discoverlife.org, DEALBAG@si.edu, bermingb@si.edu,  
patons@si.edu, rubinoff@si.edu  
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Dear Hector and Yves,

Thank you very much for inviting Discover Life to explore how we may work with IBISCA's exciting programme. This letter is to commit the full support of Discover Life and myself to helping your 2006-2011 proposal to census rainforest life. We very much support your much needed and valuable efforts to survey biodiversity and better understand their function in tropical ecosystems.

The mission of Discover Life (<http://www.discoverlife.org>) is to assemble and share knowledge about nature in order to improve education, health, agriculture, economic development, and conservation throughout the world. Each month Discover Life currently serves over 2.5 million pages and images on over 200,000 species to over 60,000 users. Our prospectus (<http://www.discoverlife.org/pa/or/polistes/pr/2005centers>) details how we intend to build an international network of technology training and support centers to help put an electronic encyclopedia with identification guides, images, maps, and text to a million species on-line by 2012. Clearly, we cannot achieve such an ambitious goal without the help of many partners such as IBISCA.

As explained in the prospectus, Discover Life has a number of Web based tools to help inventory biodiversity and share the information that IBISCA can use freely. We recently started a technology center at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. STRI has committed 50% of one of their senior database staff, Steve Paton, to oversee this center. Thus, it seems most logical that we should join forces and work together to meet our mutual goals. Please may we partner with you?

During my next trip to Panama, either in December or January, let's meet to explore ways that we can best work together. In the meantime, I very much support your proposal and strongly recommend that it be funded.

Yours sincerely,  
John Pickering

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