Dear All,

It is a pleasure to recommend Thais Gargantini Cardarelli for admission to the PhD programme in Management at the Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences. I have known Thais since 2017, both as a researcher and a consultant for governments and non-profit organizations in research-based projects, where she has performed outstandingly. She impressed me with her strong sense of purpose and her passion to use academic knowledge to improve the lives of people in Brazil. In 2019, Thais became the director of Kayma, an organization that I co-founded and lead in Israel. Kayma uses behavioural economics and data to solve complex issues in governments and non-profit organizations. Throughout our collaboration, I have appreciated her determination, perseverance and competence. I have also noticed her outstanding problem-solving skills and her ability to connect knowledge, communicate and engage people in a subject.

Thais´ ability to engage the Brazilian government and to explain in plain language how behavioural economics and data can be important tools to improve the quality of services opened the doors for Kayma. In a few months, she had met with several Ministers in the Federal Government and Secretaries in many Brazilian states. She had instructed public employees in the use and application of behavioural economics in public policy. I was impressed by her ability to work closely with Israeli officials, engaging with them and creating a community around the topic of behavioural economics swiftly and independently.

During the time we have been collaborating, Thais has led projects in several different domains. Her ability to learn, articulate and connect knowledge from different fields is remarkable. Her first project was about honest behaviours within the office of the Comptroller General funded by the United Nations. She wrote the research proposal, gathered the necessary funding and wrote the project with my support, but in a very independent way. Following this project, she collaborated with my research lab at Duke University, gathering over 40,000 responses regarding the well-being of public employees working remotely. The findings of this research were used to improve the policy on remote work for the Brazilian Federal Government. The operation she independently set up in Brazil has succeeded in obtaining finance and has grown steadily and consistently.

I would like to point out two special projects that I believe influenced her in pursuing a PhD.

I am writing regarding the Behavioural Research Assistant Brazil STC Application.

I have always been the most curious member of my circle, never satisfied with a simple and short answer to questions. This curiosity has taken me to places in almost every continent, allowed me to be creative, and motivated me to grow swiftly in my career and always think outside of the box. Until 2015, I only used this characteristic to deliver results for private companies as an executive and an entrepreneur. But all that changed when I watched a lecture by Dan Ariely in 2015. I became obsessed with the subject of unveiling the motives of decision-making and started an incredible journey.

An insatiable curiosity made me travel thousands of miles, all the way from Brazil, to have a meeting in person with Dan Ariely at the Center for Advanced Hindsight. Dan managed to guide my desire for knowledge in the best possible manner. My objective with Dan was to use my energy as an entrepreneur to open fronts on the Brazilian Government to help create better public policies. Since then, I have given several talks and workshops for the Brazilian Government about behavioural economics and the success that Kayma has had in Israel. My success so far has been largely thanks to the incredible guidance I have received from Dan Ariely, added to my own efforts, dedication and faith in change.

I now realize that maybe this insatiable curiosity meant I was always destined to pursue academic research to find solutions to complex problems. Of all the roles I have played, none of them has brought me as much joy and fulfilment as my research activities over the past year. Nevertheless, being an executive and an entrepreneur for many years in Brazil has brought me a great amount of resilience. My experience has shown me the importance of hard work and the great lessons that only failure and success can teach.

I hope to apply my curiosity and energy to further our understanding of water and sanitation customer behaviour and our awareness of the importance of sewage collection and treatment. This challenge is not only exciting: it is also meaningful and impactful, things that I consider vital when choosing where to use my energy.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

Thais Gargantini Cardarelli