

07С-3120/19.04.2023

STATEMENT

on the documents for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of science 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, in the professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty "Forest Amelioration, Forest Protection and Special Uses in Forests", academic discipline Non-Timber Forest Resources, announced by the University of Forestry in the State Gazette, No. 102 of December 8, 2023, procedure code FOR-AsP-1123-114.

Applicant: Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Slavcho Asenov Savev.

Author of the statement: Prof. Dr. Petar Zhelev, Department of Dendrology, University of Forestry, field of science 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, professional direction 6.5. Forestry, e-mail: petar.zhelev@ltu.bg.

1. Brief presentation of the candidate.

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Slavcho Savev graduated from the University of Forestry with a Master's degree in Forestry in 1994. From 1995 to 1998, he was a full-time doctoral student in the Department of Silviculture. At the same time, he conducted educational activities in Botany as a part-time Assistant Professor. He defended his Ph.D. thesis entitled "Study of Non-Timber Forest Resources in the Petrohan – Western Stara Planina area in relation to their rational use" in 2003. Since 1998, he has been an Assistant Professor and since 2003 – a Senior Assistant Professor in the Department of Silviculture. He has taught three disciplines to students of B.Sc. program in Forestry specialty, and one – to Master's degree students.

2. Compliance of the submitted documents and materials of the candidate with the requirements according to the Regulations for Academic Staff at University of Forestry.

Senior Assistant Professor Savev has presented all necessary documents required according to the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (LZRASRB) and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the University of Forestry. The information in the report on compliance with the minimum national requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor" shows that he convincingly meets these requirements, and in one case exceeds them more than three times. The points are as follows: by indicator A – 50 points where 50 are required; by indicator B – 100 points where 100 are required; by indicator C – 202.16 points where 200 are required; and by indicator D – 170 points where 50 are required.

3. Assessment of the educational and teaching activities of the candidate

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Slavcho Savev has nearly 26 years of teaching experience at University of Forestry. During his doctoral studies, he was a part-time Assistant Professor. He conducts educational activities (lectures, laboratory exercises, and educational practices) in the disciplines "Non-Timber Forest Resources," "Cultivation of Mushrooms and Herbs" (lecturer since 2013), and "Management of Non-Timber Resources in Protected Objects" (lecturer since 2008) with students from the Forestry specialty, Bachelor's degree program. He also teaches a module of the discipline "Multi-Functional Forest Management" to students from the Forestry specialty, Master's degree program. He has participated in updating the curricula for the aforementioned disciplines. He has supervised one successfully defended doctoral student (Teodor Nedelin) and 20 diploma theses, three for the Bachelor's degree and seventeen for the Master's degree. Moreover, he has reviewed a total of 16 diploma theses for both educational degrees. He has developed electronic courses in the e-learning systems of the University of Forestry (elearn.ltu.bg and on the Microsoft Teams platform) and has published three textbooks. This shows that he has significant teaching experience and is seriously engaged in student education and their successful graduation.

4. Assessment of the scientific, scientific-applied, and publication activities of the candidate

4.1. Participation in scientific, scientific-applied, and educational projects

Dr. Savev has presented information about participation in a total of 22 scientific, scientific-applied, and scientific-educational projects. He has indicated four as scientific, fifteen as applied, and three as scientific-educational. Many of the projects are related to protected natural areas in Bulgaria – national and nature parks. This shows a very good research activity, with an emphasis on nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

4.2. Characteristics of the published scientific results

The candidate participates in the competition with a total of 20 publications, not including the doctoral dissertation. One of the publications is a monograph, and one is a book based on the research in the doctoral dissertation. Seven of the publications are referenced in internationally renowned databases of scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus). Eleven publications are in scientific journals outside the attention of the mentioned databases and in collections from international and national scientific conferences and symposia. Two of the publications represent chapters from collective monographs. Twelve of the publications are in English and ten in Bulgarian.

4.3. Reflection of the candidate's scientific activity in the literature (citations)

Dr. Savev has presented information about a total of 18 citations of 8 publications, resulting in 170 points. By this indicator, he exceeds the minimum requirements threefold. The citations also show that the scientific community is acquainted with his scientific work and has appreciated its significance.

4.4. Contributions in the candidate's works (scientific, scientific-applied, applied)

The report on the contributions of Senior Assistant Professor Savev is written at a high scientific level and demonstrates the candidate's erudition. His scientific and scientific-applied contributions can be classified into three main directions:

1. Inventory of non-timber forest resources and study of their status
2. Cultivation of forest fruit tree species, medicinal plants, and mushrooms
3. Regimes for the sustainable use and conservation of non-timber forest resources

This classification is conditional, as much of the research has an interdisciplinary nature and can be attributed simultaneously to different directions. The inventory of non-timber forest resources is a clear line characterizing almost all of the candidate's scientific work, with the beginning set already with his doctoral dissertation. Territories and individual species have been inventoried, such as *Asarum europaeum*, *Adonis vernalis*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Rhodiola rosea*, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, etc. Contributions in this area are also the studies on *Tuber aestivum* and other species of mycota.

Significant contributions have been achieved in the second direction – the cultivation of forest fruit tree species, medicinal plants, and mushrooms. An in-depth monographic study on the cultivation of the American blueberry has been conducted, studying a total of 20 varieties. The obtained results have served to develop a comprehensive technology for differentiated cultivation of the different varieties. Contributions in this area also include the propagation of rare and protected plants for their reintroduction into their natural environment.

Substantial contributions have also been achieved in the third direction – determining the regimes for sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. Such regimes have been developed and proposed for the natural habitats of the old forests in Strandzha Nature Park, for the grass-forage resources in the high zone of Belasitsa Nature Park, and for a large number of medicinal plants in Pirin National Park and other areas in Bulgaria.

The achieved scientific and scientific-applied contributions characterize Dr. Savev as a scientist with a clearly defined profile, focused on the study of non-timber forest resources, but with a pronounced interest in their conservation.

5. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution.

The personal contribution of the candidate in the solo publications is not subject to discussion, and in the collective publications, it is equal to that of the other co-authors.

6. Critical notes and recommendations.

I have no significant critical notes and recommendations. Minor inaccuracies are observed in the presented information, such as that two of the projects were not funded by the University of Forestry, but by the Scientific Research Fund, with one being part of a bilateral international program. With this, in fact, the candidate has underestimated his project activities, and these inaccuracies do not affect the overall positive assessment of his work.

7. Personal impressions


I have known Dr. Savev since 1990, first as his teacher and then, from 1998 – as his colleague in the Faculty of Forestry. He is a very good lecturer and a hard-working and precise researcher. He shows a marked interest in the problems of nature conservation, biological diversity, and sustainable use of natural resources, and informs students about these issues with zeal and enthusiasm. His expert knowledge has been appreciated by the community, and he is a sought-after partner for participation in scientific and scientific-applied projects.

8. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the scientific contributions made by Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Slavcho Savev, as well as on the analysis of his scientific work combined with my own impressions, I can conclude that he fully meets the scientometric requirements set forth in the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the University of Forestry for the academic position of "Associate Professor". In several cases, he even exceeds these requirements. Therefore, I confidently propose that he be appointed to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the discipline of "Non-Timber Forest Resources" from professional field 6.5. Forestry.

19.04.2024

Sofia


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(Professor Petar Zhelev)