

## STATEMENT

on the materials for participation in a competition for the academic position and occupation of “Associate Professor” in scientific field 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, in the professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty ‘Forest Melioration, Forest Protection and Special Forest Uses’, subject “Non-timber Forest Resources”, announced by University of Forestry in the State Gazette No 102 of December 8, 2023, code of the procedure: **FOR-AsP-1123-114**.

**Applicant to participate in the competition: Dr. Slavcho Asenov Savev, Senior Assistant Professor**

**Prepared the statement:**

Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Nikolova Petkova DSc, scientific field 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, in professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty „Forest plantations, breeding and seed production ‘appointed member of the Scientific Jury by Order ZPS-22/23.01.2024 of the Rector of University of Forestry, Sofia’.

### **1. Short biography of the applicant**

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Slavcho Savev graduated with a master’s degree in forestry from the Higher Institute of Forestry (now the University of Forestry - Sofia) in 1994. From 1995 to 1998, he was a full-time PhD student in the Department of Silviculture and a part-time assistant in Botany. From 1998 to 2003, he was an assistant in the discipline ‘Non-timber forest resources’. He was defending a PhD thesis on the topic ‘Study of non-timber forest-plant resources in the Petrohan region - Western Stara Planina with a focus to their rational use’ and acquire the scientific position of "Senior Assistant Professor". He currently holds the same position.

He has good knowledge of Russian and English and a very good comprehension of digital skills.

### **2. Compliance of the submitted documents and materials of the applicant with those required under the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry (RDASUF)**

Senior Assistant Professor Savev has submitted the necessary documents required under the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry (RDASUF). The investigation shows that the applicant covers the required number of points for all indicators and exceeds some of them. The total number of points is 522.16 with the minimum requirement of 400 points. The distribution of the number of points collected by the individual indicators is as follows: indicator A – 50 points (required 50 points); indicator B – 100 points (required 100); indicator D – 202.16 points (required 200); indicator D – 155 points (required 50).

### **3. Assessment of the applicant's educational activities**

From the presented reference for classroom and non-auditory employment, it is noticeable that the applicant fulfils and re-fulfils the norm for individual employment annually. He delivers lectures for the disciplines of 'Management of non-timber resources in protected sites' - optional for bachelor's students, specialty 'Forestry', full-time and part-time study (from 2010), "Forest non-timber resources" - mandatory for bachelor's students and "Cultivation of mushrooms and herbs" - optional for bachelor's students, specialty 'Forestry', full-time and part-time studies (from 2013) and 'Multifunctional forest management' - mandatory for master's students, specialty Forestry (from 2016 for two consecutive academic years, independently, and then and currently jointly with the senior assistant professor Dr. Kalin Karamfilov).

The applicant has developed 2 curricula on the disciplines 'Management of non-timber resources in protected sites' and 'Ecosystem services in forest territories' and has repeatedly updated the curricula for the disciplines 'Non-timber forest resources', 'Cultivation of mushrooms and herbs' and 'Multifunctional forest management'.

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Slavcho Savev, has developed electronic lecture courses on the disciplines he leads in the e-learning systems of the University of Forestry (namely elearn.ltu.bg and in the Microsoft Teams platform), as well as exam tests for the same systems. He has developed 3 study aids, one of which is electronic, as well as participation in 4 books and manuals for students. He supervised 18 graduate students and reviewed 16 undergraduate theses, all in the disciplines he taught. He received a very good attestation rating from the students.

### **4. Assessment of the applicant's scientific, applied and publication activities**

#### **4.1. Participation in scientific, applied science, infrastructure and educational projects**

Dr. Savev has presented a list of his participation in 22 scientific and scientific-applied projects and in one infrastructure project, wherein he is the leader of seven of the scientific-applied projects. The number of scientific projects is 4 incl. 2 international scientific ones funded by WWF and the subalpine forest project funded by the Ministry of Education and Science and Swiss Science Foundation. The applicant's activity in scientific and applied projects is particularly high, which shows his good contact with forestry practice. The large total number of projects is an excellent proof of his professionalism.

#### **4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results**

The applicant has submitted 20 publications, of which 16 scientific articles and 4 nos. monographs incl. chapters of monographs. From them:

Independent - 6 pcs. one by indicator B (B3.1) and 5 by indicator G (G6.1., G.7.5., G7.7., G8.7., G11.2.).

- With one co-author – 4 pcs. (G8.1., G8.4., G8.8., G8.9)

- With two or more co-authors – 10 items. (G7.1., G7.2, G7.3., G7.4., G7.6., G8.2., G8.3., G8.5., G8.6., G11.1.)

Of the presented publications, 12 are in English, and the remaining 8 are in Bulgarian. Seven of the publications are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in global databases: Pharmacia, Ecologia Balkanica, Fitologia Balkanica, Forestry ideas, Nauka za gorata (G.7). The publications from group G.8. are in the journals Forestry ideas, Ecological Engineering and Environmental Protection, Sofia University Yearbook. There are also 3 reports at International

Scientific Conferences. Two chapters of monographs are also presented, one of which is independent.

#### **4.3. Reflection of the applicant's scientific activity in the literature (citations)**

Dr. Savev has presented a list and supporting material of 18 citations of 8 publications. It was established that in publication D13.4.1. no article with his participation has been cited. Thus, the total number of citations becomes 17 on 7 publications, resp. the number of points - 155, but even so the applicant exceeds three times the required minimum points according to this criterion. Of the total number of citations, 7 nos. are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases and 10 are in non-refereed publications with scientific review. The citations are from both Bulgarian and foreign authors, which shows that the scientific production of the applicant is well known both in Bulgaria and abroad.

#### **4.4. Contributions in the applicant's work (scientific, applied)**

I accept the grouping of scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions made by the applicant. I consider the following of them more important:

##### **Scientific contributions**

For the first time in Bulgaria:

- three species of *Hypogeous macrofungi* have been registered: *Tuber rufum*, *Gautieria graveolens* and *Lactarius stephensii*. New localities of *Tuber excavatum* and *Gautieria morchelliformis* (G7.1.) were also reported.
- a more detailed study of the ecological parameters for the distribution of *Tuber aestivum* in Bulgaria was conducted (G7.6.).
- the presence of the flavonoid mauritianin has been reported in the overground parts of *Astragalus cicer*, *Astragalus onobrychis*, *Astragalus glycyphyllos*, *Astragalus glycyphylloides*, *Astragalus corniculatus* and *Astragalus ponticus*. The compound is important for pharmacology, it has antifungal, gastroprotective, anticancer, etc. properties (G7.2).

Natural habitats and the conservation status of medicinal plants (*Rhodiola rosea*) in Rila and Pirin National Park (G7.3., G7.5.), Yellow gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) and *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) Spreng in Pirin - G7.7., G8.5 were studied. A resource assessment of natural habitats of *Asarum europaeum* and *Adonis vernalis* was made (G8.1. and G8.6.).

A relationship was established between soil fertility and productivity of *Aronia melanocarpa* plantations (G8.8).

A complete technology of the establishment and the growing of highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) under different soil and climatic conditions has been developed (B3.1.).

##### **Scientific - applied contributions**

The possibilities for propagation and reintroduction of the protected species Bay Willow (*Salix pentandra* L.), Giant Snowdrop (*Galanthus elwesii* Hook.) and common yew (*Taxus baccata* L.) have been studied (G8.4., G8.9.).

It was found that the species *Astragalus onobrychis* var. *chlorocarpus* and *Astragalus cicer* (G7.2) are a potential source of mauritianine.

The use of medicinal plants from the dendroflora of Bulgaria, the most used raw materials, the presence of biologically active substances in them and the areas of their application in medicine were analysed (G8.2.).

The developed overall technology of establishment and cultivation of highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) can serve in the selection of places for the establishment of new plantations of this species in Bulgaria (B3.1.).

An analysis of the pastures on the territory of Belasitsa National Park was made and a regime of their use was developed in order to preserve the natural habitats with conservation value (G8.7.).

A detailed description of 6 natural habitats in Strandzha Nature park with their specific plant species has been made, the ecosystem services provided by the respective habitats, as well as their conservation significance, were also indicated. The monograph is a valuable handbook for the old-growth forests of Strandzha Nature park in relation to their proper management and conservation (G11.2).

#### **Applied contributions:**

The monograph related to the cultivation of the highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) can be used as a valuable guide in the future establishment and management of plantations of this valuable shrub species (B3.1.).

The most important soil indicators for the formation of the fruiting bodies of *Tuber aestivum* have been determined, which can be used to select the most suitable areas for the establishment of truffle plantations (G7.4.).

The main elements of the technology for cultivation of a large range of forest fruits and medicinal plants and mushrooms are presented. Possible suitable areas for their cultivation are indicated. The material can serve as a practical guide for establishing plantations of forest fruits and medicinal plants, as well as for the cultivation of some more attractive types of mushrooms, for example shiitake, truffles (G11.1.).

#### **5. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution**

Dr. Savev presents himself with 6 independent publications and 4 with one co-author. In publications with two or more co-authors, I consider his participation as equivalent to that of his co-authors. This gives me the right to assess his personal contribution as indisputable.

#### **6. Critical notes and recommendations**

I have no significant critical notes on the candidate. I would recommend that he publishes more actively in journals with an impact factor in his future scientific work.

#### **7. Personal impressions**

I have known the applicant as my student, and since 1995 as a colleague in the Department of Silviculture. I am impressed by his hard work, tolerance, responsiveness and competence. This is also highly appreciated by the students.

## 8. Conclusion

Based on the presented materials, which fully comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry – Sofia, and my personal impressions, I offer the Senior Assistant. Dr. Slavcho Asenov Savev with the opportunity to assume the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the subject 'Forest management planning' in the professional direction of 6.5. Forestry.

Author of the statement:

/Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Pankova DSc/

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