

STATEMENT

on the materials for participation in a competition for acquiring of academic position 'Associate Professor' in scientific field 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, in professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty „Forest inventory and management“, subject „Forest management“, announced by University of Forestry in State Gazette N102/ 08.12.2023, code of the procedure: FOR-AsP-1123-115.

Applicant to participate in the competition: Dr. Toma Ivanov Tonchev, Senior Assistant Professor

Author of the statement: Assoc. Prof. Angel Atanasov Ferezliev, PhD, Forest Research Institute-BAS, scientific field 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty „Forest inventory and management“, designated as a member of the scientific jury by order N 3ПЦГ-22/23.01.2022 of the Rector of University of Forestry, Sofia.

1. Short biography of the applicant

Toma Ivanov Tonchev, was born on July, 05, 1973. He graduated from the Technical School of Forestry, Bercovitsa - speciality 'Forest technician' and from the University of Forestry in 1997 in professional specialty 'Forestry' as an engineer with M.Sc. degree. Dr. Tonchev acquired also the qualification 'Expert assessor' at the Center for postgraduate education and qualification of the University of Forestry.

His professional career began in 1998 as designer at 'Agrolesproject' Ltd. and in 1999 he was appointed as a training organiser (with the task of organising educational activities in the 'Forestry Management' department) and a part-time assistant (carrying out Forestry Management practical activities) in the 'Forestry Management' department - University of Forestry, Sofia. From 2008 to present, he has been the Senior Assist. Prof. in the Forestry Department - University of Forestry, where he delivers lectures and carries out exercises, consultations and learning practices for students in the disciplines: 'Forestry Management', 'Forest inventory' and 'Growth and Increment of Forests'.

His Ph.D. thesis presented at Forest Research Institute - BAS in professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty 'Forest inventory and management', code 04.04.02 (Diploma N31872/ 17.12.2007, of Higher Attestation Commission).

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)

The candidate Dr. Toma Ivanov Tonchev has submitted all the necessary documents and materials, required according to the RDASUF (referred in Article 60, paragraph 4. incl. the requirements under paragraph 5 and paragraph 7, which was established at the first meeting of the Scientific Jury and reflected in Protocol N1 /14.02.2024.

Dr. Toma Tonchev meets the requirements under Art. 59, paragraph 1-3 and 5 and has declared the circumstance under Art. 4.

According to the self-assessment report on the compliance with the minimum requirements for the academic position 'Associate Professor' (under Art. 59, paragraph 4 and in relation to Art. 2a, paragraph 2, 3 and 4) the applicant meets and exceeds the minimum threshold points by groups of criteria (indicated in Table 1 of the Annex to Art. 1a, paragraph 1 of PPZRASRB, Field 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine. The total number of achieved by the applicant is **781.69** points, with of a total a requirement of a total minimum of 400.

However, I believe that the specified sum of 105 points from D 13.1 and 15 items in D 15.1 of the cited 'Handbook of the dendrometric worker' (Poryazov, Tonchev, Dobrichov, 2004) should be subtracted from the total result, because the specified source is a teaching aid, which collects tables created by other authors and does not meet the requirement of authenticity of authorship.

3. Assessment of the applicant's educational activities

From the presented CV it is clear that the applicant has a long experience (from 1999 now) in carrying out exercises and teaching the disciplines 'Forestry Management', 'Forest inventory' and 'Growth and Increment of Forests' at University of Forestry - Sofia.

Under the leadership of Dr. Toma Tonchev, were defended a total of 5 graduates, one of whom graduated as 'Forestry Engineer', two in 'Bachelor's degree' and two in 'Master's degree'. In total, from 1999 to 2020, the candidate reviewed 61 diploma theses, all for Forestry students, of which 27 were for 'Bachelor's degree' and 34 were for 'Master's degree'.

The candidate is a co-author of a developed task for conducting a complex educational practice in Forest management and Photogrammetry and remote methods (part Forest management) and for conducting a complex educational practice in Forest management, General silviculture, Forest inventory and Photogrammetry and remote methods (part Forest management and Forest inventory), as well as 2 teaching (study) aids.

He participated in preparation of updated curricula in Forestry Inventory and Forestry Management, included in the curriculum of 'Forestry' specialty, 'Bachelor's degree', full-time and part-time study, as well as in 1 course and 2 tests in connection with updating the methods and the means of teaching and the methods of ongoing control and final assessment of knowledge.

The candidate is a co-author of a task developed for conducting a complex educational practice in Forest Management and Photogrammetry and remote methods (Forest Management part). He is a co-author of a developed task for conducting a complex educational practice in Silviculture, General silviculture, Forest Inventory and Photogrammetry and remote methods (part of Forest management and Forest inventory).

He is a member of the commission for updating the curricula, specialty 'Forestry' – 'Bachelor's degree' and 'Master's degree' - 2015-2023.

In addition, the applicant holds certificates as a teacher and lecturer in 7 trainings, courses and seminars.

A detailed reference in this regard is made in Item I of the presented list of professional and creative activities and appearances.

Personally, I have no direct impressions, but I have indirect information about Dr. Toma Tonchev from his students, former students of mine at the Professional Secondary School of Forestry 'Hristo Botev' - Velingrad. The opinions are positive and testify the full commitment and dedication of the candidate to his educational and teaching work.

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

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

From the CV presented by Dr. Tonchev and Item II from the list of professional and creative activities and appearances, participation in 14 scientific, applied science and research projects is evident. Three (3) of them are with University of Forestry, one (1) from the Ministry of Education, three (3) from Executive Forestry Agency (State Forestry Agency), and six (6) from State Forestry Enterprises. Over 2/3 of them are applied to forestry practice, which makes them particularly useful. The candidate was the manager of two of the projects mentioned. As a member of the Bulgarian work team, he was also a participant in one (1) scientific project financed by an international institution (Swiss Science Foundation).

4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results

Dr. T. Tonchev participates in the competition with 37 publications. The publication activity of the candidate is in accordance to the scientific specialty and the competitive discipline.

One (1) is the presented habilitation thesis (monograph), seven (7) collective monographs and one published book based on a defended dissertation for the educational and scientific degree 'Doctor'.

Twenty eight (28) publications in scientific journals are also presented - one (1) in an international refereed journal, nine (9) in Bulgarian refereed and eighteen (18) in non-refereed

journals (with 2 of them in proceedings of scientific forums - one from national and one from international).

Out of these publications, twenty-seven (27) are articles published in national journals and one (1) in an international. Ten (10) are publications in journals with an impact factor/impact rank. There is a total of 3 independent publications (1 in habilitation and 1 chapter in a collective monograph and 1 published book) and in another 6 the candidate is the first author (2 in collective monographs and in 4 articles from scientific journals).

In 28 of the publications for the competition, Dr. Tonchev is a co-author.

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

Dr. Tonchev has presented information for 36 citations of 16 publications.

Fifteen (15) of them are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world renowned databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, seven (7) in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, and fourteen (14) in non-refereed journals with scientific reviewing. According to this indicator, 365 points were collected, which exceeds by more than seven times the minimum national requirements for the academic position 'Associate Professor'.

The significant number of citations shows that the candidate's publications have been assessed as being of appropriate scientific quality and are well known and used by the scientific communities, both at home and abroad.

Along with the presented citations, criteria for Dr. Tonchev's level as a scientist and specialist are the reviews assigned to him for renowned scientific journals - the Bulgarian 'Nauka za gorata' and 'Forestry Ideas', as well as the French 'Bois et Forêts des Tropiques'.

A special impression is made by his assigned opinion on the 'System of normative-informational assessment of forests' bioproductivities of Ukrainy' for receiving the award of the President of Ukraine for young scientists.

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

The applicant has attached a report on the contributions divided into three areas:

Most of the contributions are in the direction 'Contributions related to the peculiarities of the endometric structure', growth, growth and productivity of the stands, which is an argument for the fact that Dr. Tonchev has contributed significantly to the field of the scientific specialty, for which the contest is on.

On the second place, contributions related to the organisation of the farm and optimisation of management and use in the forests were formulated, with a smaller number of those related to ecological aspects/features and the healthy state of the plantations.

The contributions from the last two strands show the interdisciplinary nature of the research carried out by the applicant. I believe that some of the mentioned contributions can be combined in their essence, but in general they are essential and help to the gaining of new knowledge in the field.

5. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution

The personal contribution of the applicant stands out clearly in the three independent scientific developments and is visible in those in which he participates as a co-author - especially in those in which the other authors are not specialists in the scientific specialty 'Forest Management and Inventory'.

On the other hand, the candidate has accepted 3 scientific-applied developments, participated in one scientific jury under the RDASUF, performed 2 consulting expertises for a commercial company and within the 'Bio Screen' project, recorded participation in 1 COST action and 7 personal and as a representative of University of Forestry participation in working groups and expert commissions and councils to state institutions and departments.

To increase his level, the candidate has acquired 8 additional qualifications, as well as 3 legal capacities.

Dr. Tonchev was a member of the organising committee of 2 international scientific forums and participated with reports in 3 other international conferences.

Everything stated so far shows that dr. Toma Tonchev possesses a wide range of complex expert knowledge and skills. As a researcher in the specialty I am familiar with a large part of the candidate's activities and his deep interests and valuable achievements in the field of 'Forest inventory and management'.

6. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no significant critical remarks and recommendations. However, I believe that the lack of independent publications and the small number of those in a leading position in scientific journals reduces the percentage of personal contribution and is a gap that Dr. Toma Tonchev needs to remove in his future publication activity.

7. Personal impressions

I know the applicant personally and have excellent impressions of his work. He has been my reviewer for several articles and I am happy with the peer reviews I have received to improve the quality of the materials. Until now, I have no participation with him in joint projects and articles.

8. Conclusion

Based on the complex analysis of the candidate's activities and achievements and the submitted materials for participation in the competition, it is clear that the dr. Toma Tonchev meets the relevant requirements for the professional field and therefore I PROPOSE to be elected as an 'Associate Professor' in the professional field direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty 'Forest inventory and management', subject 'Forest management'.

Date: 09.04.2024
Sofia

Autor of the statement: Assoc. proof. Angel Ferezliev

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TheStatement was submitted on 09.04.2024

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