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Translation from Bulgarian

STATEMENT OF OPINION

**Of Associate Professor Dinko Velichkov Ovcharov, Ph.D.
University of Forestry, Sofia, Retired**

Regarding the materials submitted in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Non-timber Forest Resources, Professional field 6.5 Forest Management, scientific field of Forest Reclamation and Amelioration, Forest Protection & Special uses.

Senior Assistant Professor Slavcho Asenov Savev, Ph.D., from the University of Forestry, has applied for the position in the competition announced in the State Gazette No.102/08.12.2023, and on the website of the University of Forestry, for the needs of the Faculty of Forestry, Department of Silviculture.

1. Brief background of the applicant.

Senior Assistant Professor Slavcho Asenov Savev, Ph.D., completed his secondary education at the Vocational High School of Communications in Sofia. He completed his higher education at the University of Forestry in Sofia and was awarded a Master's Degree in Forestry, specialization: Environmental Protection. From 1995 to 1998, he was a full-time Ph.D. student and assistant professor in 'Botany in the Faculty of Forestry at the University of Forestry. Following a competition, he was appointed full-time assistant professor at the Department of Silviculture in the same Faculty. In 2003, he was appointed Senior Assistant Professor in the same department, and he has held this position since then. He defended his Doctoral dissertation on: 'Research into the non-timber forest resources in the region of Petrohan – West Balkans, in view of their rational use'.

2. General description of the competition submissions:

The documentation and materials submitted by the applicant, Sen. Assis. Prof. Savev, Ph.D., meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), and the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff (DAS) at the University of Forestry, as was established at the first meeting of the Scientific Jury, as evidenced by Minutes of meeting No.1 of 20.02.2024.

In order to participate in the competition, the candidate has submitted 20 publications, 1 of which is a monograph, a book, 2 chapters of collective monographs, publications in scientific journals – 13, and in scientific collections – 3. His habilitation thesis is a monograph of 174 pages, published in 2023. A book of 127 pages on the defended dissertation was also published. There are also 7 scientific articles published in reputable scientific journals included in world-renowned databases. There are 3 publications in collections from international forums. Four publications are with an impact factor. There are also 6 publications in non-referenced journals.

8 publications are in Bulgarian, and 12 – in English. Five of the publications are as an independent author.

The evaluation of the points of the candidate as compared to the minimum national requirements shows that the total number of points the candidate has earned is 522.16 points, with the required minimum being 400.

Copies of the publications and all the required documents have been submitted.

3. Evaluation of the candidate's academic and teaching activity.

Sen. Assis. Prof. S. Savev, Ph.D., gives lectures (lectures, tutorials and practicums) in 4 subjects Silviculture majors:

- Non-timber Forest Resources – a required course for full-time and part-time Bachelor students;
- Managing Non-timber Resources in Protected Areas – an elective course for full-time and part-time Bachelor students;
- Mushroom and Herb Cultivation – an elective course for full-time and part-time Bachelor students;
- Multifunctional Forest Management - a required course for Master's Degree students;

The candidate is the author of 4 syllabuses and curricula for the specialty of Forestry for full-time Bachelor's Degree Programmes, and the co-author of 2 curricula for full-time Master's Degree Programmes. He has also developed digital courses in 4 subjects for Bachelor's and Master's Programmes in the e-learning system of the University of Forestry, with tests and a digital guidebook for tutorials. He has also participated in the development of three coursebooks, and parts of three books and a guidebook.

In the period from 2012 and 2024, Sen. Assis. Prof. S. Savev, Ph.D., was the scientific advisor of 18 graduates. He reviewed 16 diploma theses of Forestry students.

4. Scientific, applied research and innovation.

Sen. Assis. Prof. S. Savev, Ph.D., took part in three national scientific projects and one international project, as part of the team. He was also involved in five applied-science projects funded by Bulgarian institutions. He was the project leader of 7 applied-science projects funded by international institutions. He was also the leader of two theses funded by the experimental training forest farms of the University of Forestry, and a member of the research team of a third thesis, and also worked on 4 scientific-educational projects. He has participated in the elaboration of 3 expert statements of positions and evaluations of various forest sites.

He has been a member of the Bulgarian Society since 1999.

4.1. Citations of submitted publications

In the enclosed list of documents, 4 scientific publications are specified, cited in 8 scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, or in monographs and collective publications.

4 of the publications of the author have been cited in 10 non-referenced peer-reviewed scientific journals

4.2. Scientific and applied contributions



4.2.1. Scientific contributions

The candidate's 20 scientific contributions are grouped in 4 thematic areas:

- I. Research connected with non-timber forest resources – forest berries, wild mushrooms and medicinal plants, forage resources, grass vegetation, honey-producing plants, extraction of resins, essential oils, etc.;
- II. Cultivation, bonitation and zoning, variety testing, introduction and methods of growing forest berries, medicinal plants, mushrooms, etc;
- III. Propagation and introduction of rare and protected plant species;
- IV. Biodiversity in venerable forests and regimens for their management and protection.

4.2.2. Applied-science contributions

Criteria for identifying medicinal plants of conservation and economic significance have been determined.

The productivity, biological and operational stocks of forest-berry varieties and medicinal plants have been determined.

The medicinal dendroflora in Bulgaria, including 176 plant species, has been analyzed, and the economic significance of the most often used medicinal plants has been evaluated.

The main indicators of old forests in the territory of Strandzha have been defined.

4.2.3. Applied contributions

The impact of the structure of the tree stand and the intensity of felling in beech forests on the propagation and productivity of medicinal plants and forest-berry varieties has been investigated.

The environmental parameters and possibilities for using machinery in creating forest-berry plantations have been determined.

As pointed out by the author, the candidate's contributions can generally be classified in the field of applied botany and applied mycology.

Important results of considerable scientific and applied-science contributions have been published.

5. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate.

Sen. Assis. Prof. S. Savev participates in this competition with scientific papers that he has developed either on his own or as a significant contributor. He is the author of 5 independent publications, the first co-author of 5 other publications, and the second co-author of 3.

I believe that all the candidate's scientific and applied contributions have resulted from his original and independent research work. The same refers to the research results obtained as part of research teams.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical notes concerning the submitted work and materials.

7. Personal impressions



I have known Sen. Assis. Prof. S. Savev since 1995. He has been working at the University of Forestry for 28 years, and during this time he has proved to be an excellent lecturer, scientist and researcher. He is a knowledgeable scientist and lecturer. The research conducted by him has always been methodologically sound and performed in accordance with the requirements of the science and practice of forestry. He prepares and delivers lectures at a high, modern level. He possesses excellent professional communication skills, which he demonstrated in his interaction with both his colleagues and his students.

8. Conclusion

Based on the self-assessment report on the research work and publications, Sen. Assis. Prof. Savev undoubtedly meets the criteria for the academic position of Associate Professor, and has even exceeded most of the requirements.

On the basis of the stated above, I give my positive assessment of the teaching and research activity of Sen. Assis. Prof. Slavcho Asenov Savev, Ph.D., and I confidently propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to award the academic position of Associate Professor in Non-timber Forest Resources, Professional field 6.5 Forest Management, scientific field of Forest Reclamation and Amelioration, Forest Protection & Special uses.

19.04.2024.
Sofia

Prepared by: 
/Assoc. Prof. Dinko Velichkov Ovcharov/

The undersigned, Nina Ivanova Nikolova, do hereby certify the fidelity of the translation I have made from Bulgarian into English of the document 'Statement of Opinion', enclosed herewith. The translation consists of 4 (four) pages.

Translator: Nina Ivanova Nikolova

