

## REVIEW



on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for „**Professor**“ in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and management, scientific specialty "Economics and management" in the discipline "Economics and management of landscape architecture",

In the competition for a professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue 10 of 04.02.2025 and on the website of the University of Forestry with procedure code FOR-P-0125-157 for the needs of the Department of Forest Management and Management at the Faculty of Forestry, Assoc. Prof. Elena Ilieva Dragozova, PhD, from the Department of Forest Management and Management at the Faculty of Forestry participates as a candidate.

**Reviewer:** Ivan Petrov Paligorov, PhD, Professor in a Professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, from the University of Forestry

The review of the competition is prepared on the basis of a decision of the meeting of 07.04.2025 of the scientific jury, formed by Order No. ZPS-176/24.03.2025 of the Rector of the UF. The review reflects the fulfillment of the requirements of Art. 65 and 65a of the Regulations for RASD at the U, with particular attention to all necessary documents and materials under the requirements of Art. 65a, para. 4, from item 1 to item 12 of the Regulations for RASD at the UF.

### 1. Brief biographical data for the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Dragozova graduated with a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture in 1997. Since 2012, she has been a PhD in Organization and Management of Landscape Architecture. During the period 1999-2001, she was an accountant and office coordinator in a private company. From 2001 to 2003, she was a landscape architect, office organizer and deputy manager in the Management of a shopping complex. From 2003 to 2005, she was an organizer of educational activities in the Hunting and Wild Life Department of the University of forestry. From 2005 to 2007, she was an assistant, from 2007 to 2011, she was a senior assistant, from 2011 to 2016, she was a chief assistant, and from 2016 she is an associate professor in the Department of Resource and Environmental Management of the Faculty of Business Administration. From 2019 to 2023, she was the head of the Department of Resource and Environmental Management of the Faculty of Business Administration of the University of forestry. Since 2024, she has been the Vice-Rector for Accreditation and Rating, Communication Policy and Career Development of the University of forestry.

The above allows me to state that in accordance with the requirements of Art. 65 of the Regulations on RASD at the University of forestry, landscape architect Elena Ilieva Dragozova holds the PhD and has held the academic position of "Associate Professor" for more than 2 years.

### 2. Correspondence of the submitted documents and materials of the applicant according to the Rules of the Development of academic staff at the University of Forestry.



In accordance with the requirements of Art. 65 and 65a of the Regulations for RAS in University of forestry, the candidate for the competition has an application for participation submitted, to which she has added all the necessary documents and materials under the requirements of Art. 65a, para. 4, from item 1 to item 12 of the Regulations for RASD in UF. This gives me reason to conclude that all submitted documents and materials for the competition are in full compliance with the requirements of Art. 65 and Art. 65a, para. 4 of the Regulations for RASD in UF.

### **3. Assessment of the candidate's educational and pedagogical activities (work with students and PhD students)**

Assoc. Prof. Dragozova has been a lecturer for more than 20 years, rising through all academic positions from assistant professor in 2005 to associate professor in 2016. Over the past 7 academic years, she has reported between 335 and 546 hours per year, teaching courses and authoring or co-authoring curricula in the following disciplines: "Economics and Management of Landscape Architecture"; "Management" for the Landscape Architecture major; "Organizational Behavior"; for the Alternative Tourism (AT) and Business management (BM) majors, "Human Resources Management" for the AT, BM and Plant Protection (PPR) majors, "Economics and Environmental Management" for the Ecology and Environment Protection of major and "Business Communications and Public Relations" for the AT, BM and PPR majors. Moreover, the presentations and other teaching materials in all disciplines she teaches are uploaded to the virtual library and can be used by students in the Black Board environment. I would like to say that Assoc. Prof. Dragozova is a well-rounded teacher and colleague who loves her job, loves her students and works very hard for their preparation. Naturally, she has 8 graduates in the specialty "Landscape Architecture" and 10 in the specialty "Business Management". She has 1 successfully defended doctoral student and 2 in the process of studying. Her large academic and administrative workload forces her to organize her time very precisely in order to be able to pay attention to the preparation of students, to their desire to start their own business, for which she has received awards: Gold medal in the national Junior Achievement competition "Best Learning Company in Bulgaria for Students" for 2015; "Best Team" award in the national Junior Achievement competition "Best Learning Company in Bulgaria for Students" for 2017.

### **4. Assessment of candidate's scientific, scientific-applied and publishing activities**

#### **General description of the presented materials**

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Dragozova participated in the competition with a total of 23 publications, including: monographs - 2; published books - textbook - 1; printed and on electronic media - 1, in virtual libraries. Other publications are also presented, of which in journals with an impact factor - 7, including in foreign refereed - 5, in Bulgarian refereed - 2 and in non-refereed journals with scientific review - 14.

It can be assessed that the candidate has presented more than the required minimum scientific production, which does not repeat that for receiving the PhD degree and for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor".

#### **4.1 Participation in scientific, scientific-applied and educational projects**



Assoc. Prof. Dragozova was a member of the scientific team from Bulgaria in the International scientific project on the topic "Future-oriented sustainable management of forest landscapes in Europe" - INTEGRAL, during the period 2011-2015, funded under the VII Framework Programme of the EU. The scientific team included scientists and researchers from 21 scientific institutes and universities from 13 countries in Europe. She is now a member of the scientific team in the International scientific project "Support for decision-making for the policy and management of the conservation and restoration of forest biodiversity in Europe: trade-offs and synergies in the relationship between forests, biodiversity, climate and water (BIOCONSENT)" - 2023-2025, funded by the National Science Fund, BiodiveRestore program of ERA-NET.

She is a member of the team on a project funded by the National Science Found at the Ministry of Education and Science: "Assessment of the ecosystem service "water" provided by water protection forest areas in Bulgaria".

Assoc. Prof. Dragozova is the head of an educational project funded by NIS-UF: Research, analysis and modeling of educational competencies (acquired in UF specialties) in accordance with competency profiles for positions from the National Code of Professional Conduct.

The expert abilities of Assoc. Prof. Dragozova have been proven with the results of Activity: 1. COMPREHENSIVE LANDSCAPE AND GREENERY EXPERTISE in pre-trial proceedings No. 59/2021 according to the inventory of the National Council of Landscape Architects, ex. ex. No. 11016/2021 according to the inventory of the State Administrative Court - formed by a decree of the State Administrative Court of 03.06.2021. The questions concern the concluded contracts for landscaping of several sections of the Hemus Motorway planned for construction.

2. COMPREHENSIVE FORESTRY AND ACCOUNTING EXPERTISE to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Interior Ruse under DP No. 285/2010.

3. Chairman of the jury in the Competition for a project for "Construction of a park environment in UPI I for a park in quarter 864, Haskovo". Order No. 460/11.04.2018 of the Mayor of Haskovo Municipality.

4. Consulting services were provided for the preparation and conduct of a procedure for selecting a contractor for "Maintenance of parks, gardens, green areas along transport routes and tree plantations for 2019-2021 by separate positions" to the Sofia Municipality.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dragozova is a team member and mentor on the project "STUDENT INTERNSHIPS", funded with the support of the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", co-financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union. She is also a team member on the educational project "Building interdisciplinary teams of young researchers in the field of fundamental and applied scientific research of importance for medical practice", funded by the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", with the Base Organization - Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Faculty of Medicine - 2013-2015.



It should also be noted her participation as a reviewer in scientific journals and proceedings of scientific conferences, in the organizational and scientific committees of the International Scientific Conference "Management and Sustainable Development".

#### **4.2 Characterization of published scientific results**

The publications can be classified as follows:

**By importance:**

- In journals with Impact Factor - 7;
- Plenary reports - 16;

**Language in which they were published:**

- In Bulgarian - 13;
- In a foreign language - 10.

**Number of co-authors:**

- Independent - 4;
- With one co-author - 10;
- With two co-authors - 2;
- With three or more co-authors - 7.

#### **4.3 Reflection of Candidate's Scientific Publications in Literature (known citations)**

The presented total of 36 citations, of which in refereed journals and proceedings of scientific forums - 15 and in monographs - 7, are proof that the scientific publications were presented to the board and have aroused a certain interest.

#### **4.4 Contributions to the candidate's work (scientific, scientific-applied, applied)**

I accept as indisputable the claimed contributions of the candidate in the field of enriching existing knowledge, further developing known and existing methodological approaches, obtaining new scientific results. I allow myself to divide them into:

**I. Scientific:**

1. Enriching scientific knowledge about the specialization of work in the profession of "landscape architect", as for the first time in Bulgaria an analysis of the content of the educational competencies of graduates of the specialty "Landscape Architecture" is being made, in the context of the European Qualifications Framework and international standards for training in landscape architecture and its influence on the level of well-being of society. [B3.1.; G.7.4.; G.7.5.; G7.7]

2. Scientific theories have been studied and applied for the development of research tools in poorly researched aspects of human resources management for the implementation of the principles of sustainable development of green infrastructure. A scientific contribution has been made with models for improving training, with the aim of acquiring competencies for applying the principles of sustainable development. [G6.2.; G6.4.; G6.6.; G7.1.]

3. It has been proven that the formation of modern general and professional competencies, through the application of the competency approach, is a key factor for good implementation in the profession and indirectly affects the improvement of well-being and sustainable management of the social, economic and environmental conditions of development of modern society. [G6.3.; G7.8.; G7.10]



4. A toolkit has been proposed and results of research on various alternatives for building green infrastructure have been obtained and summarized, which would maintain a balance in sustainability between the economic, social and environmental system. [G7.11.; G7.12.; G7.13.]

5. Approaches have been developed and proposed for studying factors, relationships and dependencies influencing the behavior of stakeholders in green infrastructure management, attitude towards various ecosystem functions and services. [G6.1.; G6.5.; G6.7.; G7.2.; G7.3.; G7.6.; G7.9.]

## **II. Scientific and applied**

1. The author's methodology for assessing the correspondence between educational competencies and work competencies of the landscape architect has been developed and approved. [B3.1.; G7.4.]

2. A scientific toolkit has been developed to study the opinion of stakeholders regarding the quality of the specialized work of landscape architects, which has been systematized and verified. The proposed toolkit can be used periodically to identify educational deficits of landscape architects. [B3.1.; G6.2.]

3. Based on the results obtained from the research, the need for regulation of the profession of "Landscape Architect" has been justified, which would be in accordance with educational and professional knowledge and skills and the relevant European practice. [G7.14]

4. A research toolkit has been proposed and approved to study the motivation and degree of satisfaction of employees in higher education institutions. [G4.1]

## **III. Applied contributions**

1. A map for assessing the correspondence between educational competencies and work competencies has been developed and proposed.

2. A survey toolkit for continuous monitoring of acquired educational competencies, synchronized with the requirements of the labor market, has been developed and tested.

3. Based on the results of long-term research on competencies, competency profiles have been developed for the specialty "Landscape Architecture", the "Master" and PhD degrees.

4. Methodological elements in the training in "Economics and Management of Landscape Architecture" have been developed and proposed, including content specifically oriented towards the acquisition of specialized, educational competencies.

## **IV. Contributions to education and training**

1. Curriculum for the disciplines taught in 3 faculties have been developed, presented and adopted by the relevant Faculty Councils.

2. A textbook and a manual for exercises have been developed and published, which are used to train students in the disciplines taught by Assoc. Prof. Dragozova. The teaching content has also been adapted for distance learning and has been uploaded to the Black Board platform for electronic support of learning and distance learning, which UF has.

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

It is evident from the submitted publications and documents for the competition that the claimed contributions are the personal work of the candidate for the competition. For the



collective publications, separation protocols have been submitted, in which the leading participation of the candidate for the competition and the other co-authors is clearly defined.

## **6. Critical remarks**

I am familiar with the work of Assoc. Prof. Dragozova and a thorough re-acquaintance with the submitted publications allowed me to conclude that no significant gaps or contradictions were found. What we have commented on many times with the candidate is the detailed and rather difficult-to-understand style in many cases, with many inserted sentences and large paragraphs, which sometimes makes it difficult even for readers who are prepared and have adopted the scientific style.

## **7. Personal impressions**

I have known the candidate in the competition since she was a student, and later as a colleague and lecturer in the department. She leads the exercises in one of the disciplines in which I lecture. We have very good synchronization in the training of students and during the exams and defenses of diploma theses. As the head of the department, Assoc. Prof. Dragozova distinguished herself with excellent organizational and management qualities. This helped her in her activities as a union leader, and now in her responsible commitments in the team of the rector of the UF. I would like to note that under the active leadership of Assoc. Prof. Dragozova, the 70th anniversary of the department was celebrated and we were awarded an honorary plaque "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rumen Radev.

## **8. Conclusion**

**Considering that the submitted publications and other documents for the competition are in full compliance with the requirements of Art. 65 and 65a of the Regulations for RASDD at UF. That the assessment for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements exceeds and is above the minimum in all indicators. Considering that the candidate has the PhD and has held the academic position "Associate Professor" for more than two years, that she has presented scientific production that does not repeat the one submitted for obtaining the PhD and for holding the academic position "Associate Professor". That the submitted scientific production contains indisputable and proven scientific contributions in the scientific specialty of Economics and Management and more specifically in the field of Economics and Management of Landscape Architecture, I propose that Assoc. Prof. Elena Ilieva Dragozova, PhD to be proposed by the scientific jury to be elected by the Faculty Council for "Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty "Economics and Management" in the discipline "Economics and Management of Landscape Architecture", announced in the State Gazette, issue 10 of 04.02.2025 and on the website of the University of Technology with procedure code FOR-P-0125-157 for the needs of the Department of Forest Management and Management at the Faculty of Forestry.**

Signature of the reviewer:

Review submitted to: 22.04.2025.