

STATEMENT

01C-3703/02 05.2025.

On the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, professional field 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty "Silviculture, including Dendrology", in the discipline "Silviculture"

In the competition for the position of Associate Professor, announced in the *State Gazette*, issue No. 10 of February 4, 2025, and on the website of the University of Forestry under procedure code FOR-AsP-0125-159, for the needs of the Department of Silviculture at the Faculty of Forestry, the applicant is Chief Assistant Dr. Neno Alexandrov Alexandrov, Faculty of Forestry, Department of Silviculture.

Statement author: Dr. Momchil Panayotov Panayotov, Associate Professor of "Dendrology", Professional Field 6.5. "Forestry", Specialty "Silviculture, including Dendrology" at the University of Forestry, Sofia, Bulgaria

1. Brief biographical data for the candidate

Chief Assistant Dr. Neno Alexandrov was born on March 8, 1979, in Sofia. He completed his secondary education in 1998 at the "Hristo Botev" Forestry Technical School in Velingrad. He continued his studies at the University of Forestry. In 2002, he earned a Bachelor's degree in "Forestry" with distinction, and in 2004, he obtained a Master's degree in "Forestry" with a specialization in "Forest Management", completing a thesis at the Department of Dendrology on the topic: "Study of the dendrological diversity in the State Forestry Enterprise 'Alabak' and the possibilities for selective forest management."

In 2006, he was appointed as an Assistant in "Silviculture" at the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Forestry. He subsequently advanced through the academic ranks to "Senior Assistant" (2009) and "Chief Assistant" (2011). In 2015, he defended a doctoral dissertation on the topic: "Studies on the natural dynamics of the structure of high-mountain spruce forests in the Rhodopes," earning the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)" (Diploma ONS-2015-50, issued on May 15, 2015, by the University of Forestry).

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.

Chief Assistant Neno Alexandrov has submitted all the necessary documents and materials specified in Article 60, Paragraph 4, in accordance with the requirements of Paragraphs 5 and 7 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff (RDAS) of the University of Forestry. This was confirmed by the scientific committee for the current competition at its first meeting (Protocol No. 1/16.04.2025).

The submitted reference regarding the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" indicates that the candidate meets these requirements, and in some cases exceeds them. The point distribution by individual indicators is as follows:

- **Indicator A** – The defended doctoral dissertation fulfills the required minimum of 50 points;
- **Indicator B3** – Habilitation work – monography, fulfills the required 100 points;
- **Indicator G** – 266.44 points, with a minimum requirement of 200 points;
- **Indicator D** – 565 points, with a minimum requirement of 50 points.

In total, across all indicators, the candidate has accumulated **981.44 points, surpassing the required minimum of 400 points.**

3. Assessment of the candidate's educational and pedagogical activities

Dr. Neno Alexandrov began his university teaching career in 2006 as an Assistant in the discipline “Silviculture” after winning a competitive selection. For nearly 19 years, he has conducted lectures and practical classes with students from various specialties at the University of Forestry. Since the 2016–2017 academic year, he has been teaching the lecture course “Forest Management” to students in the “Business Management” program, Bachelor's degree, full-time. Since the 2022–2023 academic year, he has also been teaching the course “Fundamentals of Silviculture” for students in the “Ecology and Environmental Protection” program, Bachelor's degree, full-time. In the same academic year, Dr. Alexandrov began teaching the lecture course “Forest Certification” for Master students in the “Forestry” specialty, both full-time and part-time.

He has supervised five diploma theses (one Bachelor's and four Master's) and has reviewed 25 diploma theses (10 Bachelor's and 15 Master's).

Among his contributions to teaching is his participation in updating the curricula for the disciplines “Forest Management” and “Silviculture.” In 2023, Chief Assistant Dr. Neno Alexandrov developed a new curriculum for the discipline “Silviculture,” course code FOR 233, for students in the “Ecology and Environmental Protection” program, Bachelor's degree, full-time and part-time, which was approved by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Ecology and Landscape Architecture (FELA), Protocol No. 336/27.06.2023.

It is noteworthy that Dr. Alexandrov has developed a series of tests for semester exams and ongoing assessment using various digital platforms. He is the primary author of one teaching manual and co-author of six others.

The candidate also has experience as a doctoral thesis advisor; The doctoral student under his supervision has completed his studies and was dismissed with the right to defend his dissertation.

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

In the documents submitted for participation in the competition, Chief Assistant Dr. Neno Alexandrov has presented 26 scientific works, including 2 monographs (a book and a habilitation thesis), 11 chapters from collective monographs, and 13 scientific publications. A general description of the materials submitted by the candidate for the competition is as follows:

- **Monographs or chapters in Monographs –12** (1 habilitation thesis monography and 11 chapters in 4 monographs);

- **Books – 1;**
- **Publications – 13, including:**
 - Articles in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in internationally recognized databases – 6. Of these, two articles have been published in scientific journals with an Impact factor – Canadian Journal of Forest Research (5-year Impact Factor: 1.923 – G7.1) and Baltic Forestry (Impact Factor 2020: 0.772 – G7.2), while the remaining 4 are in Bulgarian peer-reviewed journals (G7.3–G7.6).
 - In non-referenced journals with scientific peer review or published in edited collective volumes – 5 (G8.1 – G8.5).
 - studia papers published in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in internationally recognized scientific information databases – 2 (G9.1 and G9.2).

There is also information regarding authorship and participation in teaching textbooks, projects, and materials that are not required under the procedure for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor" – teaching textbook: 7 items.

4.1 Participation in scientific, scientific-applied and educational projects

In the period 2008–2025, Chief Assistant Dr. Neno Alexandrov participated in 3 international projects funded by foreign institutions as a member of the research team, as well as in 3 national scientific projects. Within the Research Sector of the University of Forestry, Neno Alexandrov took part in 11 research and applied projects, serving as the project leader for 4 applied research projects.

Dr. Alexandrov's expert activity includes participation as a member of various expert groups in the Executive Forest Agency, contributing to the amendments and supplements of the "Ordinance No. 8 on Forest Harvesting", to amendments of the "Forestry Act (2011)", and providing expert opinions on other regulatory documents. The candidate has documented several applied research instructions, approved by the Expert Council of the Executive Forest Agency, that are important for forestry practice — such as guidelines for managing coppice oak forests in three state forest enterprises in the country (Northwestern State Enterprise, South-Central State Enterprise, and Southwestern State Enterprises), and instructions for the management of plantations predominantly composed of Scots pine.

4.2 Characterization of published scientific results

The publications can be classified as follows:

By type:

- Publications in scientific journals – 12;
- Publications in conference proceedings – 1;

By importance:

- Articles in journals with Impact Factor – 2: *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* (5-year Impact Factor: 1.923 – G7.1) and *Baltic Forestry* (Impact Factor 2020: 0.772 – G7.2);

- Articles in journals indexed and refereed in Web of Science and SCOPUS – 4 (G7.3–G7.6);
- Articles in journals without Impact Factor – 5 (G8.1–G8.5);
- Studies published in scientific editions, indexed and refereed in internationally recognized scientific databases – 2 (G9.1 and G9.2);
- Chapters in collective monographs – 11 chapters in 4 collective monographs.

Language of publication:

- In Bulgarian – 20;
- In English – 6.

Out of these publications, 5 are authored solely by the candidate, while the rest are co-authored.

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

- Total - 40 citations.

By type of citations:

- In reference journals and proceedings of scientific forums - 33 citations;
- In teaching aids, monographs, dissertations, etc. - 7 citations.

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

Dr. Neno Alexandrov has made contributions to the study of forest structure and dynamics, based on which he proposes applicable silvicultural solutions with an emphasis on sustainable and environmentally sound forest management.

His contributions can be grouped into several main areas:

- Natural dynamics of high-mountain spruce forests in the Rhodope Mountains, including analysis of the frequency and impact of small-scale natural disturbances and the forest structure, which allows for proposals for close-to-nature management of this forest type by appropriate silvicultural systems;
- Methods for assessing and controlling forest structure – application and comparison of indices for quantitative evaluation of the spatial and vertical structure of forests;
- Analysis and classification of Scots pine plantations according to their ecosystem suitability through assessment of their resilience, economic efficiency, and recommendations for adaptive management aimed at improving their stability and health status;
- Transformation of forest stands from even-aged to uneven-aged through modified methods of control and harvesting;
- Conversion of coppice oak forests into high forests using regionally adapted approaches for ecological classification and analysis of regenerative potential;
- Multifunctional forest management, with approaches to balancing ecological, economic, and social functions.

5. Assessment of the applicant's personal candidate

I consider that the candidate has made a significant personal contribution to the development of the scientific publications. I base this opinion on personal observations regarding the work of Chief Assistant Neno Alexandrov. Additionally, it can be noted that 5 of the publications are solely authored. At the same time, Neno Alexandrov is able to work effectively in teams, which is essential for solving complex and multi-disciplinary problems.

6. Critical remarks

I have no significant critical remarks regarding the materials submitted by Chief Assistant Neno Alexandrov. I would recommend that in the future he should focus on expanding his participation in international projects and international collaboration through various programs, which would facilitate the publication of his work results in reputable international journals with impact factor and enhance his reputation as a leading educator in the field of Silviculture in Bulgaria. Together with his colleagues, Neno Alexandrov could work on updating some of the textbooks in the fields of Silviculture and Forest Ecology, which is urgently needed.

7. Personal impressions

My personal impressions of Chief Assistant Neno Alexandrov is that he is an exceptionally hardworking lecturer who is deeply committed to the cause of raising the level of student knowledge. At the same time, Neno Alexandrov shows significant activity in the discussion of important regulatory and strategic documents related to Forestry in Bulgaria. Among his colleagues, he is known for his responsiveness and precision in his work. He is also engaged with the issues of the teaching staff at the Faculty of Forestry and with the activities of the Educational and Experimental Forest Enterprises at the University of Forestry. I believe that Neno Alexandrov have the capacity to continue the good teaching traditions in silvicultural disciplines at the University of Forestry.

8. Conclusion

Based on the submitted documents, I consider that the candidate for the position of Associate Professor, Dr. Neno Alexandrov, meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (PPZRASRB), and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff (PRAS) at the University of Forestry.

Based on this and the positive impressions outlined above, I propose that Chief Assistant Dr. Neno Alexandrov Alexandrov be elected as Associate Professor in the discipline of “Silviculture” within Professional Field 6.5 Forestry, scientific specialty “Silviculture (including Dendrology).”

Author of Statement: 
/Assoc. Prof. Momchil Panayotov/

Sofia,

18.05.2025