



REVIEW

regarding the competition for "PROFESSOR" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)", announced in SG no. 62 of 21.07.2023 with candidate Assoc. Prof. Dimo Atanasov Atanasov, PhD

by Assoc. Prof. Boryana Ivanova, PhD,
appointed according to Order No. РД-16-899/25.09.2023 of the Rector of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv as chairman of the scientific jury

Reviewer: Assoc. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova from Agrarian University - Plovdiv, field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8 Economics, scientific specialist Economics and management (Agriculture),

appointed chairman of the scientific jury by order No. РД-16-899/25.09.2023 of the Rector of the Agricultural University.

1. General data on the candidate's career and thematic development

Dimo Atanasov was born in 1975. He completed his secondary education at the Technical School of Mechanization and Automation of Agriculture - Haskovo in 1994. In September of this year, he began his studies at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, majoring in "Agrarian Economics", graduating in 2000 with a Master's degree. In 2008, Dimo Atanasov continued his educational training and began his active scientific research activity by starting the development of a dissertation for the award of the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) degree at the Agricultural University. He successfully defended his degree in 2013.

Dimo Atanasov's professional path is also clearly connected with agriculture. From 1994 until 2000, he worked on a private farm, and from 2001 until 2005, he was responsible for the "Dairy Cattle Breeding and Breeding" branch in an agricultural holding in Ireland.

Atanasov entered the Agricultural University - Plovdiv as an assistant in 2007 and successively rose in the academic hierarchy, becoming the Chief assistant in 2013 and Associate Professor in 2015.

Prof. Atanasov's scientific interests cover vital aspects of the development of the Agriculture sector. One of the areas that the candidate is researching is dairy cattle breeding in Bulgaria and the conditions for its sustainable development.

Sustainability is permanently in the focus of Assoc. Prof. Atanasov's research interests. It is observed in the publications the evolution of interests and perceptions and a gradual transition to the sustainability of organizational forms as a whole and sustainability factors in agriculture, modeling of social processes and social functions, agricultural policies, and biodynamic and bioeconomic development of agriculture.

2. General description of the presented materials

In the contest for "PROFESSOR", Associate Professor Dimo Atanasov participated with a total output of 62 papers, grouped as follows:

- ❖ *Scientific publications on the nomenclature specialty - 59 issues, of which:*
 - *Publications related to the doctoral dissertation – 3 issues, which are not subject to comments;*
 - *Publications related to the acquisition of the academic position "associate professor" - 31 issues, which are not subject to comments;*

- *Publications with an impact factor – 6 items*
- *Publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – 14 issues;*
- *Publications in conference proceedings – 5 issues;*

The personal participation of Dimo Atanasov in the specified 25 works subject to analysis is illustrated by the fact that 1 (one) is independent; in 9 (nine), he is first; in 8 (eight), he is second, and in the remaining 7 (seven) is the third and subsequent author.

- ❖ *Textbooks – 2 pcs.*
- ❖ *Study guides – 1 item.*

25 items are subject to analysis for the preparation of the position..

The scientific publications presented by the candidate and the additional results of the scientific activity show a definite compliance with the scientometric criteria for awarding the academic position of "Professor", according to the ZRASRB, PPZRASRB, and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of an Agrarian University.

Under section A - a thesis for the award of the PhD degree - Associate Professor Dr. Dimo Atanasov has presented materials that confirm the award of 50t.

Under section C - Habilitation thesis - Assoc. Dr. Dimo Atanasov presented a monograph, based on which 100 points were awarded.

Under section D - Scientific publications - Assoc. Professor Atanasov presented materials from which 222.76 points were calculated, 209.10 of them (93.87%) were obtained from articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, and 13.66 pts (6.13%) came from articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

Under Section D, concerning citations and reviews, the candidate reports 675 items, over 73% of which come from citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or monographs and collective volumes.

Under section E - Participation in projects, completed doctoral students and others - Assoc. Dr. Dimo Atanasov reports 365 items, over 32% of which are accumulated by graduated PhD students and more than 43% by managing international scientific and educational projects..

The total number of points accumulated from the materials submitted for participation in the competition amounts to 1412.76 points, with a required minimum of 550 points and compliance with the minimum requirements for the individual sections.

3. Main directions in the candidate's research work. Demonstrated skills or aptitude for leading scientific research (project management, attracted external funding, etc.)

Assoc. Prof. Dimo Atanasov has extensive experience participating in various research and educational projects. In the period after his habilitation as an associate professor, the candidate participated in multiple forms of 8 national and international projects.

Of the 8 projects presented, 2 are national, in one of which Associate Professor Atanasov participated as a researcher and in the second - as a supervisor.

The reference shows that Associate Professor Atanasov participated as a researcher in 2 and coordinator of 4 international projects.

All projects managed by Dimo Atanasov have been successfully completed, with scientific, educational, and financial parameters confirmed by the evaluating institutions. This testifies to the candidate's competence and skills in conducting scientific research.

In thematic terms, the projects in which Dimo Atanasov participated are distinguished by marked diversity but parallel to this - also with some common features.

Among the topics, the educational projects aimed at increasing the competencies for training and teaching in precision agriculture, green transition, and sustainable practices make an impression.

In parallel, scientific research focuses on healthy foods, quality of life, bioeconomy, organic farming, and increasing competitiveness.

The candidate's synthesized scientific interest can be presented as a green circular bioeconomy for increasing the sustainability of the agricultural sector in Bulgaria. The publications and topics of research and educational projects submitted for participation in the competition, in which Dimo Atanasov participated, fully confirm his involvement and his high competence in the defined topic.

4. Evaluation of the pedagogical preparation and activity of the candidate. Its role in the training of young scientific personnel

Throughout his career at the Agricultural University, Assoc. Prof. Atanasov developed an intensive pedagogical activity, which was not limited to lectures, seminars, and exercises but was also concerned with supporting the overall development of students by engaging Dimo Atanasov in many students'

extracurricular activities.

According to the official report presented by the Educational and Information Center of the Agricultural University, during the last 5 years, Associate Professor Dimo Atanasov has conducted over 4,650 hours of lectures, seminars, and exercises. The disciplines he has taken correspond to his educational training and scientific interests and cover disciplines such as "Agricultural Economics", "Ecoeconomics", "Innovations and Innovation Policy", "Precision Agriculture", "Sustainable Agrarian Systems", "Introduction to Bioeconomy" and others, as, in parallel, Prof. Atanasov was the supervisor of more than 40 graduates who successfully defended their diploma theses and obtained the Bachelor's degree and the Master's degree. As part of his direct teaching activity, Assoc. Prof. Dimo Atanasov conducts classes in a foreign language annually with students who carry out incoming mobility at the Agricultural University and with international students studying to acquire a Master's degree in majors taught in a foreign language.

Assoc. Prof. Atanasov's work with young researchers also deserves admiration, as he has supervised 8 young scientists studying for PhD degrees. Three of them have already successfully defended their dissertations, one has been dismissed, and the remaining four are active doctoral students who successfully carry out their activities.

Dimo Atanasov is an active participant in the Student Group for Scientific Research activities at the Department of Economics at the Agricultural University, whose primary goal is to stimulate the research activity and scientific interests of the students studying the Bachelor's and Master's courses. He is also the national coordinator for Bulgaria of the competition for student teams BISC-E "Biobased Innovation Students Challenge - Europe".

His overall activity gives reason to highly evaluate the candidate's pedagogical preparation and the successful efforts he makes to train young scientific personnel.

5. Significance of the obtained results, proven by citations, publications in prestigious journals, awards, membership in international and national scientific bodies, etc.

The quality of the scientific production and the significance of the conclusions and proposals generated as a result of the candidate's work is clearly illustrated by the fact that of the 25 scientific papers subject to review, 11 are the subject of significant interest from the scientific community and have found a place in the form of citations in 33 scientific articles and 3 monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes.

A further illustration of the importance of scientific output is the fact that 20% of the submitted scientific work is cited in publications presented in some of the most prestigious scientific journals in the world, with almost 17% of the proposed citations made in publications of quartile 1 journals (Q1), with 5 articles cited, and an additional over 15% of the citations presented are from publications in quartile 2 journals (Q2).

The prestige and competence of Prof. Atanasov are also confirmed by the fact

that he is part of the scientific team working on the BIOEAST international initiative, where he is a leading representative of the Agricultural University.

In parallel, two scientific journals - "The Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Management" ("Economics and Management of the Agricultural Economy") and "Zagadnienia Ekonomiki Rolnej" ("Problems of Agricultural Economics") - trusted his competence, and he was accepted for a member of their editorial boards.

The presented information gives reason to conclude that Dimo Atanasov is a scientist of established national and international prestige whose scientific output is highly valued by the scientific community.

6. Significance of contributions to science and practice. A motivated answer to the question to what extent the candidate has a clearly defined profile of research work

Analysis of the candidate's research work clearly demonstrates his focused attention and growth in capacity and competence.

The highlights of the entire scientific career of Assoc. Prof. Dimo Atanasov can be summarized in five directions, which evolutionarily flow from one to another.

The beginning of its development in the scientific sphere is associated with the study of sustainable agricultural development, particularly sustainable agrarian systems, with an in-depth analysis of the sustainability of dairy cattle breeding.

At the next stage, the candidate's scientific interests are expanded and conceptualized, focusing on agricultural sustainability and factor conditioning of the economic vitality of agrarian systems.

The third direction is expressed in including digital and innovation elements in sector models, publishing, and participating in digitalization and precision agriculture projects.

Derivative and cumulative of the previous directions is the fourth direction in the evolution of Assoc. Prof. Atanasov's scientific interests, namely research related to the green circular bioeconomy.

A vital role throughout the entire path of development of Prof. Dimo Atanasov is played by the fifth direction in his scientific interests – the formal institutional environment (national and European policies for impact on the Agriculture sector), which is closely related to each of the emphases mentioned above in scientific research.

In this sense, the scientific production of the candidate testifies to his consistent, purposeful development, which forms him as a profiled specialist with concrete contributions in the direction.

I. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Adapted approaches and tools for research, analysis, and evaluation of work parameters in agricultural holdings;
- Developed methodology for risk assessment in agriculture, aimed at assessing the factors creating risks for business;

- Adapted methodologies for analysis and evaluation of the technical and economic efficiency of various technologies in agriculture;
- Presented an innovative technological model that can be adapted for different cultures in different conditions.

II. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

- Clarification, enrichment, and further development of theoretical statements and concepts regarding the economic, ecological, social, and technological features of agricultural production systems and the institutional conditions for their development;
 - Defining the internal and external factors affecting the development of agriculture and rural areas;
 - Critical analysis of national and European policies and tools to impact the sector focused on defining models to achieve more intelligent and sustainable development;
 - Assessed the potential of new technologies to ensure more sustainable and intelligent social and economic development following ecological features;
 - The theoretical explanation of the various risks and measurement of their strength and probability of occurrence;
 - Conceptual management approach based on organizational innovation and improvement of working conditions.

III. APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS

- The innovations that find application in the agricultural sector are presented;
- A serious analysis of innovative technologies in precision agriculture was made;
- The potential benefits of innovative technologies in different sectors and types of farms are shown;
- The model for using cheap soil additives and organic waste in agriculture is presented;
- Proposed local management model for the design and implementation of modern institutional tools to ensure the sustainability of agriculture and regional development;
- The reasons for the low motivation of workers in agribusiness organizations and the possibilities for overcoming the problem have been established;
- The effectiveness of heating from different energy resources was analyzed, and their effectiveness was evaluated from a personal and social point of view.

7. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical remarks or recommendations to the candidate concerning the participation in the competition and the presented scientific production.

8. Personal impressions and opinion of the reviewer

I have known Dimo Atanasov personally since he entered the Agricultural University in 2007. I am convinced that Assoc. Prof. Atanasov is a candidate who has all the professional qualities, including professional qualification and competence, teaching experience, and scientific output, to be elected to the academic position "Professor".

He also possesses all the necessary personal qualities – responsive, communicative, responsible, honest, and fair, which testify not only to his scientific competence but also to his high emotional intelligence and social responsibility.

Last, his administrative competence, accumulated during his two terms as Dean of the Faculty of Economics, should be noted.

I believe that this combination of scientific, personal, and administrative competencies makes Associate Professor Atanasov an excellent candidate for the academic position of "Professor".

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the candidate's pedagogic, scientific, and scientific-applied activities, I believe that Associate Professor Dimo Atanasov Atanasov meets the requirements of ZRASRB, PPZRASRB, and the Regulations of the Agrarian University for its application.

In my opinion, the overall activity of Dimo Atanasov, together with his personal characteristics, gives complete grounds for him to be a successful candidate for the current competition.

With his scientific activity, he has contributed to optimizing the development of the agricultural sector in Bulgaria.

With his administrative activities, he created conditions for the development and prosperity of the entire Faculty of Economics.

With his teaching activity, he has contributed to the professional and personal growth of dozens of young people, thus supporting their development and the improvement of society and the functioning of the Agriculture sector.

All this gives me a reason to evaluate his overall activity positively.

I propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to vote positively and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the Agrarian University - Plovdiv to elect Assoc. Dr. Dimo Atanasov Atanasov as "PROFESSOR" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)".

Date: 26/10/2023
Plovdiv

REVIEWER:
(Assoc. Prof. Boryana Ivanova, PhD)